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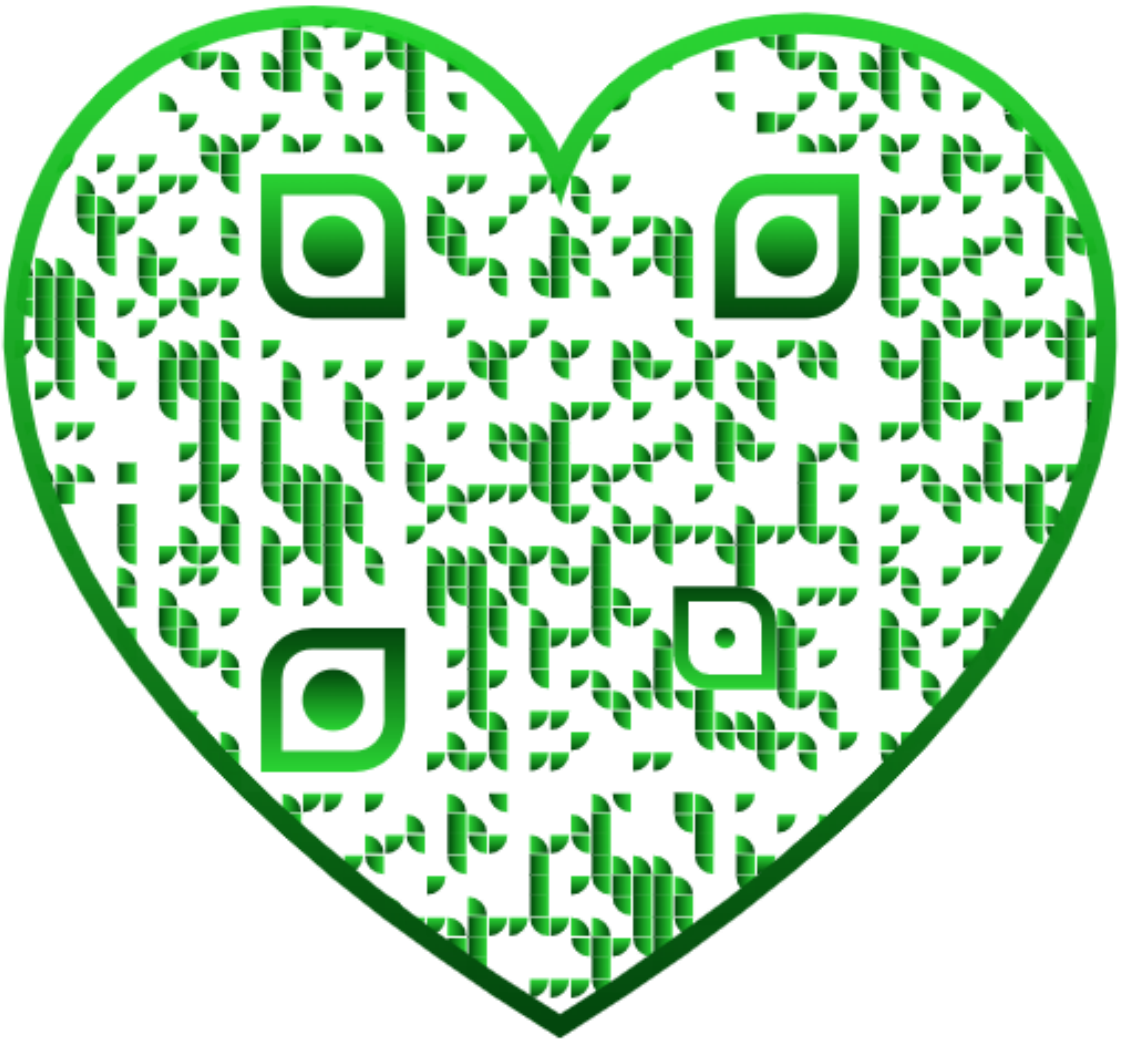

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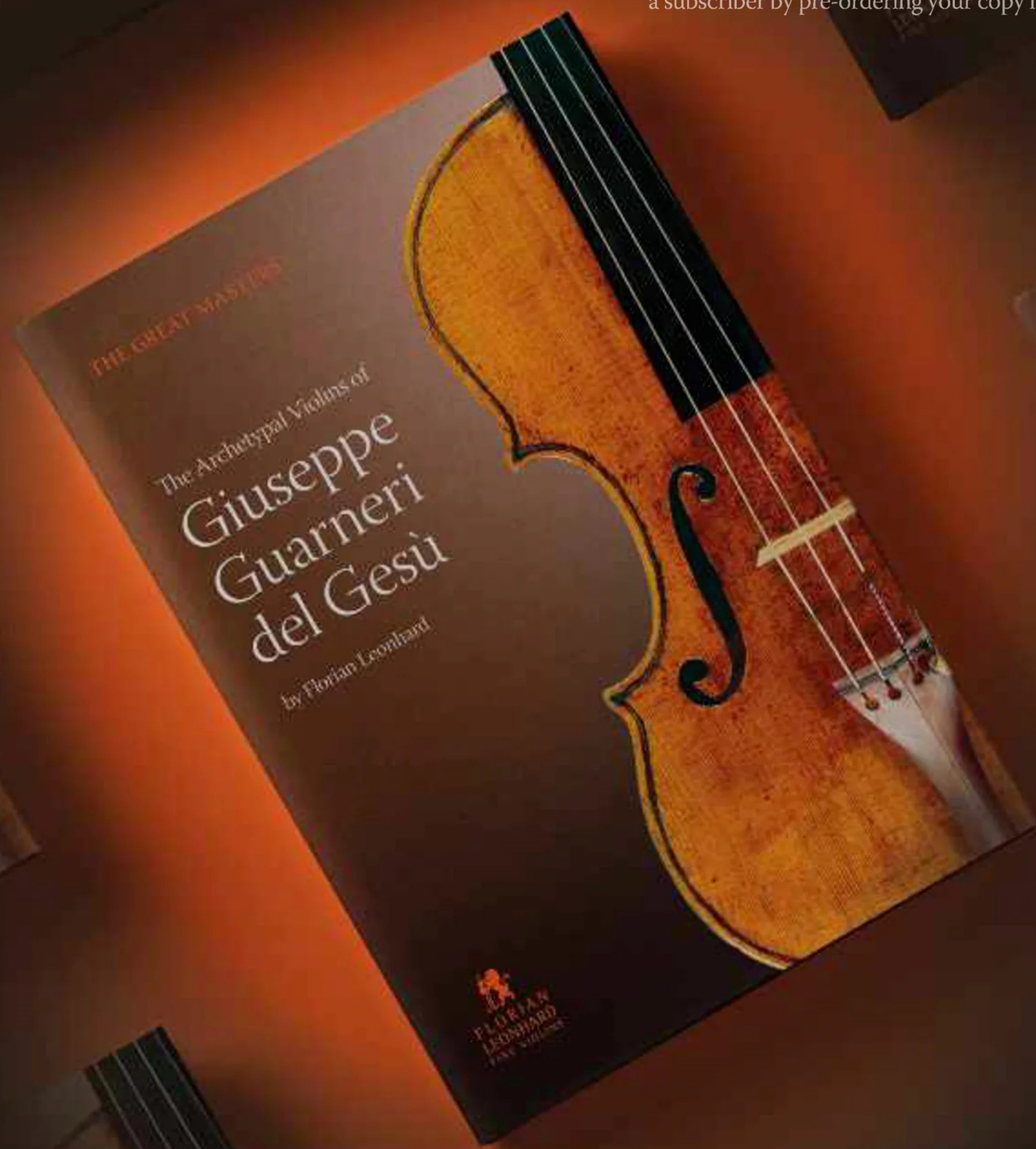

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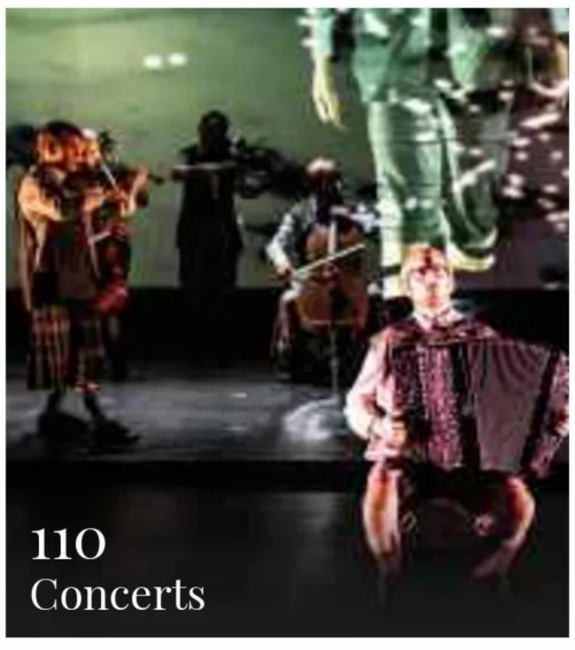

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Editor's letter

September may herald the end of summer, but it also signals the start of the new concert season and the academic year. Here at *The Strad* we traditionally mark the month by celebrating learning and education in all their forms. On our cover is the brilliant 27-year-old American violinist Randall Goosby. His star is truly in the ascendant with two albums for Decca under his belt and an array of high-profile concert dates. But despite his relative youth, he is already deeply committed to passing on what he has learnt to the younger generation. On page 32 he speaks to Amanda Holloway about mentoring young string players, taking music into the community and being an ambassador for diversity in classical music.

Music college is an exciting but high-pressured environment for the budding professional musician. Even the most talented and conscientious student will experience moments of anxiety and self-doubt. On page 58 Rita Fernandes examines the mental health provision in conservatoires; it's gratifying to discover that more of them are increasingly focusing on a holistic approach to producing happy and well-balanced student musicians, well prepared to enter professional life in the music industry.

Taking on an apprentice luthier can be an intense experience too, and involves much care and responsibility on the part of the professional. On page 50 violin maker Sarah Kluge shares her tried-and-tested methods for training an apprentice all the way from student to journeyman, while maintaining a functional and harmonious workshop. Her article includes a useful checklist for any other professional makers who may be accepting apprentices into their team.

And what of the older learner? Billy Tobenkin is living proof that it's never too late, having started the cello from scratch aged 25. Now a professional player and teacher, on page 42 he shares his thoughts about choosing repertoire for the adult cello student, and argues why diving straight into classic works such as Bach's G major Prelude – as long as some adjustments are made – could give the mature learner exactly the motivation they need.

Emma Baker editor
Email me at **thestrad@thestrad.com** or tweet **@TheStradMag**

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Cover photo Ollie Ali

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Contributors

RAINER MICHAEL COCRON

(In Focus, page 85)

studied the violin with Igor Ozim at the Salzburg Mozarteum. For the last decade he has been travelling the world to value and authenticate fine stringed instruments. In 2016 he joined Ingles & Hayday in London, UK, as a specialist and head of sales.

DAVID FOLLAND

(Making Matters, page 94)

graduated from the Violin Making School of America in 1983. He has made more than 230 instruments and in 1996 achieved *hors concours* status at the Violin Society of America's international making competition. He is based in Northfield, MN, US.

GEORGI NIKOLOV

(Trade Secrets, page 88)

is a Bulgarian violin maker now based in Cremona, Italy. He is a graduate of the Cremona School of Violin Making and received a first prize for modern violin at the 2021 ANLAI Violin Making Competition in Pisogne.

ELOISE RIDDELL

(Books, page 125)

is a freelance double bass player based in London, UK, who plays with a number of leading orchestras. She teaches at Junior Guildhall, Kensington Preparatory School and privately, and directs the London Basses double bass workshops.

DMITRY TARAKANOV

(Dealing with a buzz, page 78)

studied lutherie at the Violin Making School of America. He combines a scientific approach to violin making with traditional aesthetics. He gives lectures on violin making and acoustics to everyone from schoolchildren to professional musicians.

BILLY TOBENKIN

(Adult learners on the cello, page 42)

started studying the cello at the age of 25. In 2013 he completed his second bachelor's degree in cello performance, and today he specialises in helping adults who, like him, found the cello later in life. His most influential teachers include Ronald Leonard and Hans Jørgen Jensen.

the Strad

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LETTER *of the* MONTH

Heifetz with Ayke Agus

TO NOTATE OR NOT TO NOTATE

Regarding the recollections of my outstanding colleagues Ayke Agus and Zina Schiff on whether Jascha Heifetz used predetermined fingerings and bowings ('Inside Jascha Heifetz's teaching studio', bit.ly/3Owzfms) I would like to comment on their observations. Mr Heifetz used fully fingered and bowed music for his own use. For public performances he had totally unmarked parts. He considered his own markings as his intellectual property. Fellow violinists from the audience were mightily surprised when rushing to his music stand to find an unmarked violin part.

Mr Heifetz was tremendously helpful to his young students, marking their music as well as guiding them to find their own solutions. Advanced students used their own markings; Mr Heifetz only criticised when necessary. A few times over his long career he had reconsidered his preferences of bowings as well as fingerings. For my edition of the Korngold Violin Concerto, I used two different copies of Mr Heifetz's music from his estate. They are similar but by no means identical.

In my opinion Zina Schiff and Ayke Agus are both correct. Mr Heifetz used predetermined sets of fingerings and bowings that evolved over time. Likewise, he found the ideal approach to teach youngsters as well as advanced violinists.

ENDRE GRANAT
Sherman Oaks, CA, US

LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS

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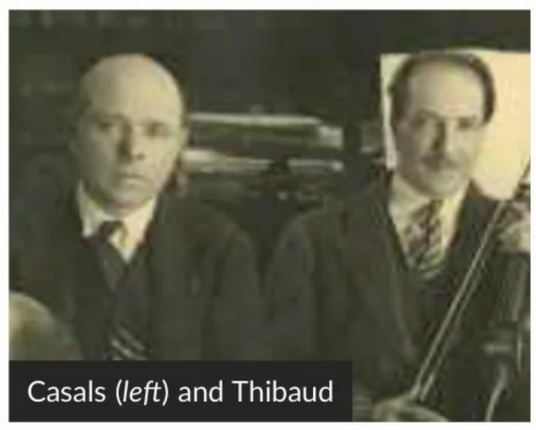
GIVE IT A REST

I wonder just how many players have a drawer of unused chinrests and shoulder rests. I have tried many of them, so my drawer is something of a heritage investment of assorted rests. Over the years I have discovered that it is not just a question of finding a perfect chinrest. There is a relationship between the shoulder rest and the chinrest. It is a marriage of the two that will succeed in providing a good playing position. Beyond that, it is a question of finding a combination that will hold firm for an entire rehearsal or concert.

For some time, I was convinced that I needed the lowest shoulder rest and the lowest chinrest. In fact, I needed a shoulder rest that was adjusted to quite a good height, but I had stubbornly resisted that. It is well worth experimenting with the shoulder rest, not just buying more chinrests. The feet of the shoulder rest can be tried in different positions and adjusted to suit the player. Otherwise, the only other option may be to take up the cello.

ROB BARNES
Norwich, UK

JUST FOR LAUGHS



Casals (*left*) and Thibaud

I enjoyed Tully Potter's account of Jacques Thibaud's life and times ('Grace, charm and effortless elegance', August 2023), but I felt the article failed to capture the man's notorious sense of humour which made such an impression on his friend Pablo Casals. In his own memoirs *Joys and Sorrows* (1970), Casals called Thibaud 'wonderfully witty and gay' and recalled his fondness for practical jokes: 'Sometimes our impresario, Boquel, travelled with us, and Thibaud was constantly playing jokes on him. Boquel was very fastidious – he even wore gloves when playing cards. On one occasion he went out of the room during a card game and left his gloves on the table. When he put them on after coming back, he found his fingers projecting from their ends. In his absence Thibaud had cut off the fingertips. Another time, when Boquel started to brush his hair just before one of our concerts, he found to his horror that his brush was coated with butter. It was, of course, Thibaud's doing. Naturally, Boquel became rather piqued by this sort of thing.'

FREDERICK STARKEY
Queen Camel, UK

SOMETHING MISSING

In response to Norman Werbner's argument (Opinion, July 2023) that Beethoven intended for the slow movement to end his op.135 quartet, instead of the famous 'Muss es sein? Es muss sein!' movement, I propose an additional speculation. Beethoven himself said that he could not bring himself to compose the last movement. What if we take him at his word and imagine that he did not, in fact, compose the last movement, but merely envisioned it as the fifth and final movement of this quartet? Imagine a Bartókian five-movement work in arch form, with its great central slow movement (*Lento assai e cantante tranquillo*) flanked by two scherzos, the first, in triple metre, more 'traditional' than the second, so-called 'difficult decision'. And what exactly is this difficult decision? Could it be simply to write '*Fine*' after the final bar of this strange beast and keep the real Finale forever locked in his brain? Or to spill the final glorious movement out on to the manuscript for the whole world to see?

Just for the record, in spite of Mr Werbner's persuasive argument, I cannot envision the great slow movement as the final one of this quartet. There are too many examples in Beethoven's oeuvre of profound, breathtaking, penultimate movements followed by one or sometimes two more movements of considerably lighter character. The op.74 quartet immediately comes to mind but there are plenty of examples, and not just in the string quartet genre.

SEAN R. MAC AODHA
Ventura, CA, US

ONLINE COMMENT

In response to a January 2011 article on the life of the great Belgian violinist and composer Eugène Ysaÿe, fans of the musician commented on his achievements, career, and even his physical appearance bitly.ws/Pcu3

CRAIG BEAGLEY He was the teacher of Yehudi Menuhin! Thanks, Maestro.

IKARI SHINJIKU Ruggiero Ricci's recording of his Six Sonatas are outstanding.

JOSEPH SCHEER Here is a story about Ysaÿe. In one of Carl Flesch's tomes he describes a young student, who dissed Sarasate in a lesson with Ysaÿe. Ysaÿe chastised him, saying 'Do not forget that Sarasate taught us all to play in tune.' Ysaÿe was also the first violinist to use a more or less continuous vibrato.

KURT KAMMEYER Look at the size of his hands!

LUDMILA SMOLYANSKAYA Such a wonderful violinist and a magical teacher.

ZAFER TEOMETE A great violinist and great musician. Rest in peace.

TWOSET PHOTO CECILIA TAN

www.thestrad.com TOP 3 ONLINE POSTS

1 TwoSet Violin's (*below*) Brett Yang on performance nerves bit.ly/3Y5u1kJ

2 Concert review: Joshua Bell (violin) Daniil Trifonov (piano) bit.ly/3QdScvt

3 Amati five-string cello bought by New York museum bit.ly/3Ow15iv

PODCAST OF THE MONTH

the Strad PODCAST

Episode #86: violinist Francisco Fullana on playing a 1735 Guarneri 'del Gesù' violin bit.ly/3q3Ldub

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On the beat

News and events from around the world this month

Read all the breaking news in the string world online **www.thestrad.com**

Access for all

Having survived the pandemic, the city of Cremona is embracing new technology in its efforts to bring its violin making heritage to the world

By Peter Somerford

The grand opening of the Casa Stradivari on 4 July

The Italian city of Cremona is increasingly finding different ways of making its violin making heritage relevant and tangible to diverse audiences. Visitors to the Museo del Violino (MdV), which opened ten years ago this month, can now browse digitised archives, catalogues and other documents in a new consultation room. In the same space they can also feel the archings on a 3D-printed replica of Stradivari's 'Stauffer, ex-Cristiani' cello of 1700, which is the nearest they will get to touching one of the precious Cremonese instruments in the museum's so-called Treasure Room. Half a mile across the city, at Corso Garibaldi 57, the house where Stradivari lived and worked from 1667 to 1680 has been restored from a derelict state and is now open to the public for guided tours. No mere relic, the Casa Stradivari is instead a cultural centre housing a workshop for apprentice violin makers, rooms for acoustic analysis and varnish research, a space for concerts, exhibitions and instrumental training, and a studio apartment for an artist-in-residence.

The driving force behind the renovation of Casa Stradivari has been Swiss–Italian violinist Fabrizio von Arx. He plays on the 'ex-Madrileno' Stradivari of 1720, which was rechristened the 'Angel' in 2018 when it was blessed by a cardinal in Venice's Basilica San Marco. As a 300th-birthday tribute to the violin, von Arx devised a musical pilgrimage from Geneva to Cremona for a documentary, and wanted to end the film with a visit to Stradivari's first house and workshop. He found the building abandoned, the homeware shop that used to occupy the ground floor having closed down. 'The place was derelict but I felt something special being there,' he says. 'When I climbed up to the top of the house, and stood in the room with the roof terrace where legend has it that Stradivari hung his newly varnished violins to dry in the sun, it was intensely emotional.'

Inspired to bring the house back to life, in 2021 von Arx co-founded the Casa Stradivari Foundation, which commissioned an extensive renovation of the building. 'The aim was not just to reconstruct the house but to remake the lifestyle of Stradivari,' says the violinist. 'It is an artistic project inspired by Stradivari's continuous research and perfecting of the violin form, and the synergies of this work with the music of the great violinist–composers of his time, such as Corelli, who were developing violin technique. Casa Stradivari is a living house, a place that celebrates the artistic approach and the transmission of ideas and creativity.'

On 1 October four apprentice violin makers will start an 18-month course in the Casa Stradivari atelier under the guidance of Cremona-based luthiers Bruce Carlson, Marcello Ive, Primo Pistoni

YUMA MURATA

'Casa Stradivari is a living house, a place that celebrates the artistic approach' – *Fabrizio von Arx, violinist*

and Davide Sora. The apprentices will each make a full quartet of instruments. Researcher Carlo Andrea Rozzi and luthier Alessandro Voltini will oversee the acoustic analysis of the instrument plates and the finished instruments, and chemist Curzio Merlo will conduct studies of the varnish. 'We will also have violin makers from across Europe come to give masterclasses and presentations,' says von Arx. 'These will be in the MdV and will be accessible to the violin making community of Cremona. The foundation will also present public concerts in the MdV's Arvedi Auditorium. We want to be open not just to violin makers and musicians but to the whole city.'

At the MdV, the new consultation room is also addressing the interests of different audiences. Three computer workstations allow visitors to browse catalogues dedicated to Stradivari workshop artefacts and to the museum's collection of instruments by 20th-century Italian luthiers. There is information about the classical Cremonese instruments exhibited in the museum's Treasure Room, plus material from the Bacchetta archive, a census of Italian luthiers who were active in the years immediately preceding the Stradivari bicentenary celebrations in 1937. MdV curator Fausto Cacciatori says future digital content will include documents about the conservation interventions carried out on the museum's instruments and paper exhibits. He adds: 'We are also looking at making available the manuscripts of Count Cozio di Salabue, which are kept in the State Library in Cremona.'

A large video screen in the consultation room plays a sequence of computed tomography (CT) images of the 'Stauffer, ex-Cristiani'. Below the screen is a 3D-printed replica of the cello's soundbox, which Harry Mairson, a professor of computer science at Brandeis University, MA, US, produced after making CT scans of the instrument in 2017. Cacciatori says: 'While the contents of the room are particularly interesting to instrument makers, researchers and scholars, this 3D-printed replica has already made the room extremely popular with a wider, less specialist audience, because they can touch and feel an object that is completely alike in shape, size and volume to an original instrument. We are developing other projects to expand this kind of offer in the near future.'

The consultation room's workstations are a prelude to making more documents and materials available on the museum's website, says Cacciatori. 'Improving accessibility is one of the goals of any modern museum, and we absolutely want to develop this digital provision in the coming months. The first years of the MdV's life were characterised by the study of the collections and the publication of catalogues. This commitment must be accompanied by the maximum dissemination of knowledge.'

UWE ARENS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Julia Fischer receives Bavarian arts award bit.ly/44D2Gc2

Violinist Julia Fischer has received the 'Pro Meritis Scientiae et Litterarum' award from the Bavarian State Ministry for Science and the Arts. The 40-year-old (*left*) received the honour at a ceremony in Munich on 17 July. At the presentation, Bavaria's science and arts minister Markus Blume called Fischer 'one of the outstanding violin soloists of our time'.

Violinist charged with attempted murder via rat poison bit.ly/3KfxHKT

A violinist from the Schleswig-Holstein Symphony Orchestra has denied in court that he attempted to kill his mother and two colleagues with rat poison. According to the indictment, the 62-year-old is alleged to have mixed the poison in his 93-year-old mother's food in a retirement home in Hanover in early September 2022. On a concert tour, he is said to have given the two orchestra members – another violinist and a cellist – a garlic dip mixed with the poison brodifacoum. The case is scheduled to continue until the end of September.

Garth Knox receives honorary doctorate from RCS bit.ly/3Q9Kr9O

Violist and composer Garth Knox received an honorary doctorate in the presence of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's graduating class of 2023 at a ceremony on 6 July. Born in Ireland, Knox spent his childhood in Scotland and is now based in Paris, where he enjoys a full-time solo career, giving recitals, concertos and chamber music concerts all over Europe, the US and Japan.

Do you have a topical story concerning the string music world? Email us at **thestrad@thestrad.com**

OBITUARIES

IRENE SHARP

US cellist and pedagogue Irene Sharp died on 13 July at the age of 87. She taught on the faculties of the Mannes College of Music and the University of California at Berkeley, and her students included soloist Matt Haimovitz, Philadelphia Orchestra principal cello Hae-yi Ni and Amos Yang, associate principal of the San Francisco Symphony.

Born in 1936, Sharp studied with Margaret Rowell and attended masterclasses with Pablo Casals at Berkeley in 1960. In 1996 she founded California Summer Music, a three-week summer training programme for young musicians, which has been going for more than two decades. Sharp was its artistic director. She also served on the faculties of Meadowmount School for Strings, Bowdoin Summer Music Festival, and Indiana University's String Academy. Sharp was an invited speaker at the national meetings of the Music Teachers' National Association and the Music Educators' National Conference, and gave numerous teacher-training workshops worldwide.

Sharp received an Outstanding Teacher award from the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) in 1992.

VICTOR PIKAYZEN

Ukrainian violinist Victor Pikayzen died on 8 July aged 90. His performing career spanned five continents, playing a range of repertoire including works dedicated to him by Aram Khachaturian and Boris Tchaikovsky. He was considered an expert interpreter of Ysaÿe, Bach and Paganini, having played the 24 Caprices in concert 78 times in his life.

Born in Kyiv in 1933, Pikayzen began playing the violin aged four. He went on to study at the Kyiv Conservatoire. During World War II he lived in Kazakhstan, eventually relocating to Moscow to study at the Gnessin State Musical College with violinist David Oistrakh. He continued his studies with Oistrakh at the Moscow Conservatoire, graduating in 1957 and completing postgraduate studies in 1960. He became a soloist with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra that year.

Pikayzen was a laureate of many competitions, including second prize at the Jan Kubelík Competition in 1949, fifth at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in 1955 and second at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1958.

He enjoyed a long career as a teacher following his competition successes. In 1966 he joined the faculty at the Moscow Conservatoire, where he remained until 1986, and returned in 2006. He also taught at the Moscow State Institute of Music and the Central Music School, as well as the Hacettepe University Ankara State Conservatory from 1993, and held guest professorships in Japan and Taiwan.

Pikayzen received the People's Artist of the Russian Federation award, the Honoured Artist of the Russian Federation award and honorary doctorates from multiple international universities.

DAVID NEUBERT

American double bassist David Neubert died on 26 June at the age of 69. For 30 years he served as principal bass of the Austin Symphony, Ballet and Opera Orchestra in Texas, and professor of double bass at the University of Texas at Austin (UTA) from 1982 to 2011. He was also UTA's director of instructional technology from 2011 until his retirement in 2014, and a pioneer in the field of online music teaching.

Born in 1954, Neubert earned a master's degree in performance from the Eastman School of Music and a doctorate from UTA. He was an active participant with the International Society of Bassists (ISB), chairing two of its annual conventions: the first at UTA in 1986 and the second in 1993 at the Interlochen Arts Academy. In 2017 he also hosted 'The Making of the ISB' panel presentation at Ithaca College, to mark the society's 50th anniversary. He also contributed to *American String Teacher* magazine. In his retirement, Neubert helped to launch a community arts centre in rural north central Kansas.

JACKIE HARTLEY

British violinist Jackie Hartley has died aged 63. Born in Ormskirk, she studied with Howard Davis of the Alberni Quartet and received a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London. There she studied violin and piano, and later harpsichord, and formed the Hartley Piano Trio. She graduated in 1982, becoming principal second violin of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1984.

Over the next decade, Hartley performed with numerous ensembles, including the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Academy of St Martin in the Fields Orchestra and Chamber Ensemble. She served as assistant leader of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and sub-leader of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, before going on to co-lead the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) in 1998, at the invitation of Simon Rattle. She remained in the post for seven years. Hartley also taught at many schools, including the RAM and Royal College of Music.

ANTON SIE

The Hong Kong-based violin maker Anton Sie died in June 2023 aged 87. His life was chronicled by author Elizabeth Ostring in her 2017 biography *Crafting a Symphony in Wood*.

Born in 1935 in Kudus, Indonesia, Sie studied theoretical physics at Jilin University in China. After graduating he became a researcher at China's North Eastern Institute of Physics, specialising in quantum physics and acoustic physics. His passion for violin making began when a 1/8-size violin he made for his seven-year-old daughter was noted to have excellent acoustic qualities when she played it in a music examination.

Sie moved to Hong Kong in 1977 where he taught violin, cello and guitar privately, but concentrated on violin making and repair work, particularly for the Hong Kong Philharmonic and visiting musicians.

HARTLEY PHOTO PHILIP TAYLOR

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Photo: Violin by Luiz Amorim, copy of "del Gesù" Cessole, 1736

KING'S COLLEGE: The dark form of Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, watches over luthiers Louis S. Peterson and Andrew Atkinson on a violin study day in Lincoln Cathedral, UK, on 30 June. The event saw students, alumni and friends of the Newark School of Violin Making transform the cathedral's south transept into a workshop for the day, with instruments by Andrea Amati and Gasparo da Salò also in attendance. 'It was inspiring to work in the extraordinary medieval space of the cathedral,' said Peterson. The day was part of the cathedral's 'Byrd 400' festival and marked the climax of a year of events celebrating the Newark School's 50th anniversary. Photo: Benjamin Hebbert

PREMIERE *of the* MONTH

New traditions

A violin concerto transforms folk tunes from around the world

COMPOSER **Anna Clyne**
WORK ***Time and Tides***
ARTIST **Pekka Kuusisto (violin) Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra/Jukka-Pekka Saraste**
DATE **8 September 2023**
PLACE **Musiikkitalo, Helsinki, Finland** bitly.ws/LWcC

Anna Clyne

Pekka Kuusisto

CLYNE PHOTO CHRISTINA KERNOHAN. KUUSISTO PHOTO MARK ALLAN/BBC

British composer Anna Clyne's new violin concerto *Time and Tides* takes inspiration from folk songs. While the tunes are all centred on the themes of boating and parting from loved ones, they are also representative of the orchestras that commissioned the work: the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra and Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The work is written for Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto, with whom Clyne has collaborated extensively. 'He's such an inspiration, as both a conductor and a performer,' she says. 'He's able to cover a wide range of emotional territory, so I wanted a piece that explores that breadth.'

The five-movement work is full of contrast, with moments of both virtuosity and simplicity. Four of the movements, 'My True Lover's Farewell', 'Who Can Sail Without Wind?', 'My Fair Young Love' and 'The Golden Willow Tree', are based on folk songs from England, Finland, Scotland and America respectively, while the last movement, 'Farewell', incorporates all four tunes. Each movement begins with Kuusisto playing the original melody, after which Clyne takes the material in a more contemporary direction with her own harmonies and orchestration. Parts of the work will also see Kuusisto improvise. 'It was obvious I wanted to leave space for him to express himself,' she says.

The last movement is a layering of the four preceding movements, and ends with a final, fully orchestrated iteration of the first movement's theme. 'Melodies are superimposed, and I weave them together until the very end.' The layering technique is largely inspired by the composer's electroacoustic work.

Kuusisto has also been involved in the compositional process. 'We had a couple of Zoom sessions where he showed me new techniques on the violin, sometimes while whistling and singing' – which she includes in the work – 'and he would send sections with feedback. His collaboration has made for a stronger piece.'

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COMPETITIONS

Affinity Quartet

Mio Imai

Christian McBride

❶ On 9 July the **Affinity Quartet** took home first prize and AUD30,000 (£15,800) at the **Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition**. The Madrid-based quartet comprises violinists Josephine Chung and Nicholas Waters, violist Ruby Shirres and cellist Mee Na Lojewski. They also won the AUD30,000 Robert Salzer Foundation String Quartet prize and the AUD8,000 Audience Prize. In the Piano Trio category, **Trio Orelon** (violinist Judith Stapf, cellist Arnau Rovira i Bascompte and pianist Marco Sanna) was awarded the AUD22,500 first prize, as well as the AUD3,000 Trio Commission Prize.

❷ US violinist **Mio Imai**, 12, won first prize and €5,000 at Italy's **Il Piccolo Violino Magico competition** in San Vito Tagliamento. She also won a violin by Italian maker Fabio Piagentini. The €3,000 second prize went to Yeonah Kim, 9, from South Korea, while the €3,000 third prize was split between Australian–British violinist Jayda Lu, 11, and Elizabeth Song, 13, from the US.

❸ Ireland's National Concert Hall has announced the winner of its 2023 bursaries, including the **Young Musician Award for String Players**. Both violinist **Sarah Brazil**, 15, and cellist **Adam Joyce**, 16, were awarded the latter. Brazil wins €6,000 while Joyce receives €4,000.

❹ On 17 July, US jazz bassist and educator **Christian McBride** was awarded the **Wigmore Medal**. The award honours exceptional musicians with a close relationship with London's Wigmore Hall, where McBride is an associate artist. During his career, McBride has won six Grammy Awards, recorded extensively, and become a respected educator.

AFFINITY QUARTET PHOTO JAMES GRANT. MIO IMAI PHOTO COURTESY IL PICCOLO VIOLINO MAGICO. MCBRIDE PHOTO EBRU YILDIZ

APPOINTMENTS

- Slovakian violist **Šimon Truszka** has joined the Pavel Haas Quartet
- **Midori** will head the Ravinia Steans Music Institute's piano and strings programme as of this autumn
- Emerson Quartet violinist **Philip Setzer** has been name artistic director of the Manchester Music Festival
- **Tabea Zimmermann** will return to the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts in Germany as professor of viola after a 20-year gap

FORTHCOMING COMPETITIONS & AWARDS

Luigi Nono International Chamber Music Competition in Turin, Italy, all string chamber groups with up to eight players aged between 15 and 33. First prize €2,000 **Deadline** 30 September; competition 20–22 October **Web** amiciperlamusica.com

Sphinx Competition in Detroit, MI, US, for black and Latinx string players aged 30 or under. First prize $50,000 **Deadline** 23 October; competition 24–27 2024 **Web** bitly.ws/PccX

Chicago International Violin Competition online, for violinists aged 7–28. First prize $5,000 **Deadline** 31 October; competition 19 November **Web** chicagoviolincompetition.org

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The lutherie workshop of Vermont Violins has released the very first commercial double bass fingerboard made with a black ebony alternative. The GaiaTone fingerboard is made of compressed post-consumer recycled paper and bio resin. 'We continue to work with Sonowood for other instruments' fingerboards, but it's very expensive for basses given the amount of material needed. GaiaTone is far more affordable,' says the company's part-owner, Kathy Reilly. The bio-resin makes the material completely 'green' and sustainable, unlike other compressed materials which use phenol formaldehyde resin. The workshop sources large sheets of the material and cuts the fingerboards with a CNC machine.

With supplies of ebony running low and illegal sourcing commonplace, Vermont Violins' goal is to 'shift people off ebony' by offering alternatives. 'We can be proactive, use alternatives and not be part of the problem,' says Reilly. She says that the effect the fingerboard has on the instrument's sound is insignificant; much less than altering soundposts, strings, bridges and bass-bars. 'I suspect ebony was chosen in the 17th century simply because it was stronger than native hardwoods, and it was available. There wasn't extensive scientific testing done on its structural properties,' she says. 'There are other tropical woods that have physical properties more suited to making a good fingerboard, but it is only out of tradition that ebony has continued to be used and associated with a good fingerboard.'

The shift to ebony alternatives will require different tools (GaiaTone is made of a harder material) and a change in mindset on the part of makers; achieving the latter is 'more difficult than finding alternative materials', according to Reilly. 'It's not about taking ebony out; it's about supporting sustainable use and offering alternatives, and avoiding countries having their forests wiped out, like Madagascar. We don't need to rely on these resources to the point that music becomes more important than our environment.'

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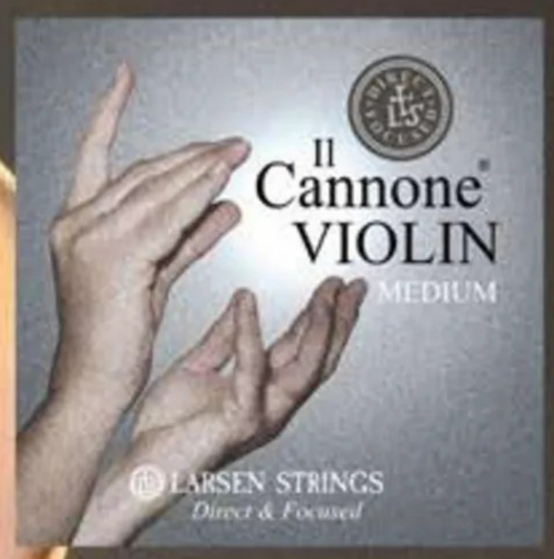

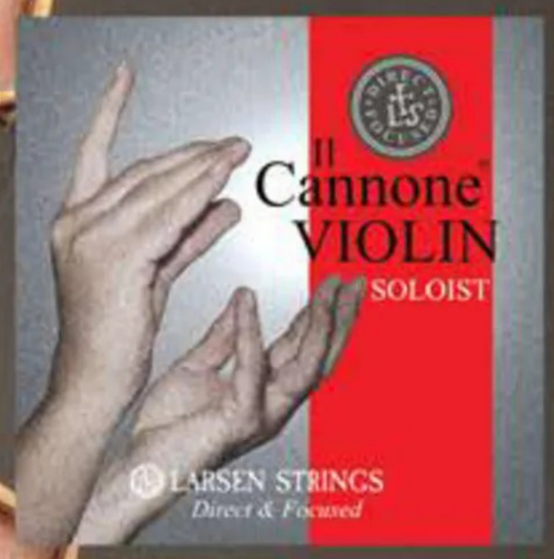

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Life lessons

Ronald Copes

The Juilliard Quartet second violinist on the joy and value of collaboration in chamber music

Right from the beginning I was introduced to the skill of problem-solving. My first tutor Wilda Tinsley helped me understand how to teach myself, figure out what my problems were and use my own mind to fix them. It's something that has seeped into my own teaching, and I think about it when reflecting on my own playing. When I was 15 I attended the Meadowmount School of Music for the first time. It was my first exposure to that level of playing among young people, and I quickly realised that hard work really does pay off. I also learnt from Ivan Galamian there. The way he was able to codify the production of a good, solid sound was nothing short of genius. When I went to the Oberlin Conservatory of Music I studied with David Cerone, which was a whole other experience. He was always so open to trying new things pedagogically and not committed to one idea. It was a very fresh approach. Even though these, and a few others, were my 'official' teachers, as a quartet player I always have three teachers in the room with me.

My first year at Oberlin saw the experience that confirmed my passion for chamber music. The composer Milton Babbitt was undertaking a residency and the faculty quartet were to perform his String Quartet no.2. After they realised it was too difficult for them, the piece fell back on to us, so we dived into it. We had coaching every day, worked really hard on it for three weeks and it went pretty well. After experiencing such a sense of accomplishment and joy, I knew chamber music was going to be an important part of my life.

In a chamber group you must always remind yourself that you are playing with people who you respect, and whose ideas you should never exclude. If you remain truly open, you're in a position to learn. When you experience success it's easy to think you've figured it all out and you start to concretise your ideas. But if you are challenged by your colleagues you realise there are so many other ways of accomplishing the same thing. When you share ideas in an ensemble, you won't end up choosing one idea over the other, but deciding something completely new that none of you could have figured out alone. There's some kind of group intelligence that sorts it out, and it's magical. Your ideas are never as far apart as they seem.

As a quartet player I always have three teachers in the room with me

Self-criticism is an essential part of being a musician. This can be very close to judging oneself, which is almost always destructive. Separating those two things is one of the most important skills to develop. I fell into self-judgement at one point, and it makes you feel like you can't contribute anything. But if you keep a healthy level of self-criticism, you develop a sense that no matter what your limits are, you can always contribute something to the musical world.

INTERVIEW BY RITA FERNANDES

The Juilliard Quartet

TOP PHOTO COURTESY THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL. QUARTET PHOTO ERIN BAIANO

SOFTLY DOES IT

As string players, we are often encouraged to make a big sound, but cellist **Davina Shum** believes that the art of playing quietly is an underrated one

Fellow string players: I wonder how many times you've heard (or thought) the words, 'Play louder!', 'More projection!', 'Play to the back of the hall!'

Whether we're teaching or doing our own practice, we string players place a lot of emphasis on the strength of our sound, and often this is interpreted as 'big'. Forte, robust, strong and so on are all adjectives that suggest that this sound is unlocked using muscular force, which, when left unchecked, can lead to strain injuries. We then must learn to attain our concert hall-filling sound utilising gravity, with correct weight distribution using the muscles of our back, torso and arms.

Something that I believe isn't given enough thought is the idea of also utilising this strategy for soft playing. How many of us have practised our pianissimo playing as diligently as we've practised our forte playing? And how many string players notice their shoulders creeping upwards towards their ears, with an onset of aches and pains, when told by a teacher, coach or conductor to 'play quietly'?

How many of us have practised our pianissimo as diligently as our forte playing?

Playing softly is tough! It's harder than playing loudly, because we're taught how to make a big sound, something that is emphasised in schools – we study the grand staples of string repertoire at the conservatoire, including solo concertos and sonatas, where we're battling against an orchestra or a beast of a grand piano. It wasn't until I started playing in orchestras regularly that I wondered, 'How do we, as a section of eight cellos, make a collective soft sound?' Moreover, how do I create a soft sound without achy arms and unnecessary tension, and without squirming impatiently in my seat as I wait for those seemingly endless tied *ppp* semibreves to be over?

Instruct a young beginner to play quietly and they will learn that this equates to a lighter touch in the bow arm (accompanied by the furrowing of eyebrows, or pursing of lips). But often the instruction stops there, and although that lighter touch might produce enough of a contrast from a simple loud blast, often what can emerge is a wispy, raspy sound, with no core or focus to the note. Because the student is so concerned with creating a quiet sound, they grip the bow for fear of dropping it (even at a young age, stories of broken bows can make a child wince), which causes tension in the fingers, arm, shoulders and neck – all the way up to the aforementioned furrowed eyebrows and pursed lips.

What we perhaps forget is that we already have the tools to play quietly: instead of focusing solely on loud versus soft, we need to focus on tone and quality of sound. I had a lightbulb moment during my university studies while practising Ševčík tone exercises. In order to play with consistent tone, I had to play with balanced posture, keeping my shoulders down even while drawing the bow. I then realised that by focusing on tone, and making micro-adjustments with the bow hand, I could maintain the core of my sound even while playing softly, and without sacrificing my shoulder stance. It took a while for me to trust myself to be able to relax when playing quietly.

Perhaps learning to play strongly with good tone is the key to playing softly with conviction. But we need to remember to continue our sound exploration to include soft playing, so that players aren't hurting themselves trying to play that way. Furthermore, we need to avoid thinking within the binary constraints of loud equals more pressure and soft equals less pressure.

I invite string players to focus on practising soft playing for once – to practise mindfully and identify exactly what creates that sound that makes audiences lean in and take a collective breath, that makes the hairs stand up on the back of a person's neck. Your neighbours might thank you for it.

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Spirit of camaraderie

The tenth Osaka International Chamber Music Competition and Festa featured not only a dizzying array of high-level music making, but also a sense of mutual support between the competitors, reports **Robert Markow**

Tokyo has glamour and glitter; Kyoto and Nara shrines and temples. But what about Osaka? It has one of the world's leading chamber music competitions, the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition and Festa, whose large scale was in evidence at the tenth edition this year (12–19 May), with 161 ensembles from 34 countries applying to take part. The event hosted 33 of them: including ten string quartets, nine piano trios and two piano quartets. There were 56 individual performances, plus two full-length winners' concerts, yielding around fifty hours of music over eight days. Ten ensembles shared more than 13 million yen in prize money (about £71,000), and the three first prize winners have been invited back for tours of Japan. This triennial event, organised by the Japan Chamber Music Foundation (whose mandate is to stimulate interest in chamber music in Japan as well as to contribute to international exchange through music), is actually three interlocking competitions, each with its own jury and set of prizes.

Competition banners in Osaka

Distinguished cellist Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, aged 80, presided over a jury that included two first prize-winning alumni from the early years of the competition (violist Monika Henschel of the Henschel Quartet and cellist Alasdair Tait, formerly of the Belcea Quartet).

The competition kicked off with all ten quartets presenting one of the Beethoven op.18 string quartets (five chose no.4 in C minor, and three no.1 in F major) plus Webern's *Five Movements* op.5 (the alternative choice, Kurtág's First Quartet, had no takers). Each quartet found a different way of interpreting the Webern, and all were convincing. Perhaps best of all was the performance by the Moser Quartet (Switzerland), which brought terrifying ferocity to the fast movements and dark mystery to the slow ones. For me, the best Beethoven (no.1) also came from the Moser, which turned in thoroughly polished playing, a full range of expressive gestures and a homogeneity of sound and balance rarely found in quartets.

Two days later, eight quartets competed in the second round (with longer programmes now, of 40–50 minutes) to become one of the five chosen for round three. Again, the Moser stood out, as did the Hono (Japan) and Malion (Germany) quartets. All three left me in awe of their absolute technical virtuosity, balanced sound and unanimity of interpretation. Other quartets were prone at times to an overwrought approach that left me wondering if they were trying to sound like an entire orchestra. Of the 36 works by 20 composers that were possible repertoire choices, no one played anything by Schubert, Schumann, Dvořák or Shostakovich. Four chose Brahms (all no.2). Of the contemporary choices, Ligeti's First Quartet came up three times, while Bartók was represented just once (no.4).

Round three (16 May) narrowed the competition from five to the three that would become the top prizewinners – the Hono, Indaco (Italy) and Terra (US) quartets. The former two were

PHOTOS JCMF

particularly impressive. A sheen of beautiful sound, immaculate execution, perfection of balance and an overall sense of refinement surrounded the playing of the Indaco, which was also capable of projecting even the faintest wisp of sound as well as great volume with no trace of harshness. The Hono distinguished itself with stark loud–soft contrasts, a highly expressive approach and absolute technical perfection. The repertoire in this round was twofold: one of the middle-period Beethoven quartets and *Boids Again* (2020), specially composed (for the original Covid-cancelled tenth edition) by Misato Mochizuki.

Following the final round (18 May), Tsutsumi expressed his profound respect for the extraordinarily high standard of this competition before announcing the winners: first prize, Indaco; second, Hono; and third, Terra. Afterwards, Tait said to me: 'The musicians were so committed, honest and genuine, so aware of the structure of the music, and so courageous in defining what they wanted to say about the music. It was a very intense competition requiring much repertoire, and generating a lot of pressure. But in the end, I think every quartet discovered something new about themselves.'

Osaka is one of the few international competitions that includes piano trios and piano quartets, and this year the standard was even higher than it was for string quartets. Japanese critic and chamber music aficionado Yawara Watanabe, who regularly travels the world to hear competitions, declared: 'This was the finest collection of talent I have ever encountered for piano trios and quartets, and is probably the case in the entire history of music.' For the first time, first prize was won by a piano quartet: the Capybara Quartet (Germany), formed barely two years ago yet demonstrating such beauty of sound, balanced sonorities and unity of interpretation that one could easily have imagined it as a seasoned ensemble with years of experience under its belt. Second and third prizes went to the Pantoum (France) and Michelangeli (Germany) trios.

Festa, the third component of the competition, invites chamber groups of two to six players of any age, in any instrumental combination and in any repertoire to compete before a jury of music fans drawn from the public at large. Festa has become a big public draw in Osaka, a sign that the competition is realising its goal of encouraging Japanese music lovers to devote more attention to chamber music; the audience this year was the largest ever. The 200-strong Festa jury awarded both the top Menuhin Gold Prize (whose namesake came up with the idea of the Festa) and the Folkloric Special Prize to five-member Mongolian ensemble Tenger Ayalguu on traditional instruments including bowed strings. Silver Prize went to an equally deserving French quintet, Le Bateau Ivre, consisting of a string trio plus flute and harp playing music by Jolivet, Jongen and Cras.

The Osaka competition stands out among international events of its kind in its sense of purpose. 'It is one of the big global players,' said Henschel, 'but it goes beyond just winning prizes. It empowers young musicians to interact with society, to network, to seek goals beyond artistic values.' A spirit of camaraderie and mutual support seemed to pervade the entire competition, with ensembles cheering each other on whether or not they advanced to the next round. Henschel noted the same spirit among jury members, 'It is the most supportive jury I have ever worked with, all of us imagining ourselves on stage with the performers.'

The competition is held in Izumi Hall (seating capacity 821), modelled on the larger Grosser Musikvereinssaal in Vienna and with acoustics of comparable excellence – perfect for chamber music. If chamber music is your passion, skip Osaka's Expo 2025 and wait a year for the next competition, scheduled for May 2026.

The Indaco Quartet from Italy, winner of the first prize in the string quartet competition

A SHEEN OF BEAUTIFUL SOUND, IMMACULATE EXECUTION, PERFECTION OF BALANCE AND A SENSE OF REFINEMENT SURROUNDED THE PLAYING OF THE INDACO QUARTET

The heights of viola heaven

Carlos María Solare reports from the 48th International Viola Congress, which took place in the tropical surroundings of Salaya, at the western borders of Thailand's capital city

Around a hundred violists convened in Thailand for the 48th International Viola Congress (IVC), which took place from 6–10 June 2023. As a board member of the International Viola Society, I had a good excuse for arriving a few days early for our meetings. These were held over generous breakfasts that left a sizeable part of the day free for sightseeing in a part of the world none of us had visited before. As a side effect of going about Bangkok in a *tuk-tuk* (a kind of motorised rickshaw), I developed an unsuspected ability for bargaining with drivers! A high point – in every sense – was an evening of cocktails while watching the sunset from one of the city's famous rooftop bars. It being a Buddhist holiday, they only sold non-alcoholic beverages; however, at dinner elsewhere, later that night we were informed that it was perfectly fine to drink alcohol from an opaque glass!

Salaya's Prince Mahidol Hall

Mahidol University is situated in Salaya, just outside Bangkok's city boundaries. Its luxuriantly leafy campus boasts a varied flora – and fauna: one day I ran across a rather imposing pair of monitor lizards.

Florida-born Daniel Keasler has been based in Bangkok for twelve years as associate principal viola of the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra (TPO) and a teacher at Mahidol University. Having founded the Thailand Viola Society in 2012 he is an experienced hand who has organised several successful viola events at a regional level, so it seemed a natural progression for him to host the IVS's annual congress in 2023. Keasler explained that his first move was to lobby his orchestra into engaging a renowned violist as soloist for a subscription concert, after which he proceeded to build a five-day event around that date.

The TPO's concert at the state-of-the-art Prince Mahidol Hall was indeed a conclusion worthy of the occasion. Enthusiastically conducted by Pamornpan Komolpanorm, the orchestra featured its principal violist Aibek Ashirmatov in an exciting reading of *Harold in Italy* that stood in maximum contrast with Schumann's Cello Concerto, which – as performed on the viola by Ettore Causa – became the concert's 'still centre'. Causa, the Italian-born viola professor at the Yale School of Music, is well known for the succulent, seductive sound he draws from his instrument: at the 2000 Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition, where I first heard him, he was even awarded a special prize for 'the most beautiful sound'. Causa's arrangement of the Schumann works well for this admittedly biased pair of ears, and his performance made an excellent case for it, his slender tone at the top contrasting with a convincingly cello-like bottom range.

The congress schedule was typically tight, with at least two events happening at any given time. The College of Music's various buildings are within a few minutes' walk of each other but, with temperatures around the 35C mark, choices became increasingly dependent on whether or not it would be necessary to rush between locations. In exemplary fashion, Keasler seemed at least to look in at practically every concert and lecture, while somehow managing to play the ▷

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TPO's rehearsals for the final concert! He also performed with the Libere Quartet, made up of the orchestra's principals, in a sensually sonorous reading of Moeran's appropriately viola-centred String Quartet no.2.

While it's not possible to provide an exhaustive report of the five days, some personal highlights stood out for me. Being of a musicological slant, I was fascinated by Vinciane Béranger's investigation of Rebecca Clarke's manuscript sources, which – apart from her own fingerings and editing – include some intriguingly divergent readings. Clarke and other composers from her generation – Kalitha Dorothy Fox, Hélène Fleury and Marcelle Soulage – were championed in Daphne Gerling's enterprising recital. Juliet White-Smith took a stand for composers from the African diaspora: a most Mozartian sonata by the Chevalier de Saint-Georges and two tuneful pieces by Florence Price (both in White-Smith's transcriptions) framed the first original viola works by a black composer, namely the one-movement Sonatina and the fully fledged, four-movement Sonata by Ulysses Kay, who studied at Yale with Hindemith.

Hillary Herndon introduced an anthology of music by black and Latino composers from the mid-18th century to the present day. Aimed at beginners (American String Teachers Association levels 1 and 2), the collection includes a catchy *Gallop* by Francis Johnson and María Grever's once-ubiquitous song *Júrame*. Enhanced by effective arrangements, these will be eminently worthwhile additions to teaching repertoire when the edition is published. Already out is an anthology of viola music by women composers that was introduced by Pamela Ryan (professor at the Florida State University College of Music). Although Beatrice Mattei's Sonata is most likely not an original piece, its Classical language – think Scarlatti – makes it an agreeable recital opener. Otherwise, Freda Swain's lovely, extremely English *Song at Evening*, Claire Scholes's raga-inspired *Diwali Aukilani II* with its ever-so-subtly changing rhythmic patterns, and Patsy Gritton's cheeky *Jazz-Dance* are just a few of the collection's highlights.

Bangkok-born Patcharaphan Khumprakob offered a beautifully shaped Bartók Concerto

The week at the IVC – the first ever to be held in Asia – showcased much local talent (in the broadest sense). Bangkok-born Patcharaphan Khumprakob offered a beautifully shaped and forcefully characterised Clarke Sonata and Bartók Concerto. The latter featured at a concert with the university's orchestra which also included the first performance ever of Marco Anzoletti's post-Brahmsian, somewhat overlong, and outrageously difficult Viola Concerto no.1 (1900), dispatched with jaw-dropping virtuosity by Marco Misciagna. TSO member Krit Supabpanich presented several exacting unaccompanied pieces by contemporary Thai composers. Andrew Filmer from nearby Malaysia premiered Nicole Ong's *Breaking Free*, a guitar-accompanied piece that uses scordatura to bring forth some strangely viol-like timbres. Namgon Lee (South Korea) offered intriguing ideas on expanding the pre-Baroque repertoire using that era's transcription techniques.

Yue Qi from Renmin University of China in Beijing, a most sensitive player, symbolically opened his recital with a lovely performance of Coates's *First Meeting*, following it with several folk-inspired works by 20th-century Chinese composers. Qi was joined by his students for a beautifully blended rendition of York Bowen's *Fantasy Quartet*, with the Chinese chestnut *Red Lilies Crimson and Bright* for a rip-roaring finale. The group's unanimity of sound production, phrasing and vibrato was a thing of wonder. Conversely, a viola quartet from Taiwan came over as four distinct, effectively contrasting voices in Tung-You Su's sultry *Autumn Tango*. The congress motto, by the way, was 'Music without borders' – and indeed where else would you find citizens of both China and Taiwan partaking of one and the same event?

ANZOLETTI'S POST-BRAHMSIAN, SOMEWHAT OVERLONG, AND OUTRAGEOUSLY DIFFICULT CONCERTO WAS DISPATCHED WITH JAW-DROPPING VIRTUOSITY BY MARCO MISCIAGNA

KRISTOFER SKAUG

RANDALL GOOSBY

‘ALL IT TAKES IS ONE’

American violin virtuoso Randall Goosby may only be in his twenties, but he is already deeply committed to passing on his passion for music to the younger generation, as he tells **Amanda Holloway**

OLLIE ALI

Even a violin superstar needs a day off now and then. Randall Goosby is calling from the back of a taxi (the seatbelt is a giveaway) and admits that he's just been playing a round of golf with a friend in upstate New York. Relaxed and refreshed, he's heading back to his apartment in the city to prepare for a recital at his alma mater, the Juilliard School: the finale of a symposium dedicated to fostering the legacy of the great string teacher Dorothy DeLay. Goosby (now 27) was not one of DeLay's students; instead he was the protégé of Itzhak Perlman and was recommended to the Juilliard junior programme by Perlman himself. He has just completed an artist diploma with Perlman and Catherine Cho at Juilliard, fitting it around a busy schedule of concerto and chamber performances around the world. Signed to Decca in 2020 at the age of 24, he released his first recording, a recital entitled *Roots,* in 2021, and his second, of violin concertos by Bruch and Price, in May 2023. You'll also find him on the soundtrack of *Chevalier*, the flashy new biopic about 18th-century virtuoso violinist and composer Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges – sometimes described as the 'black Mozart'.

But there's another side to this articulate, engaging young man which sets him apart from other soloists. Born in San Diego, California, to a Korean mother and African American father, Goosby had the chance – through parental support, good teachers and programmes for students with promise – to develop his musical talent. 'I've always had very selfless and considerate teachers behind me and I think that's a big part of why I am where I am,' he says. He is determined that other children, particularly from underserved communities, have the same access. He's not just paying lip service to the idea of outreach but rolling up his sleeves and getting stuck in.

In 2018, still just 22, he won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York City and acquired professional artist management. In 2019 he was named the inaugural Robey Artist by the UK's Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) and its affiliated charity, London Music Masters (LMM). He started mentoring students in schools around the UK. 'Many of them were students of colour, and I was told by everyone, kids and adults, how meaningful it was to see someone who looks like you doing anything – especially in a field like classical music where there are so few of us. It can't be overstated how important that is for kids who are starting to get interested and involved in classical music.'

Now, wherever he is performing he looks for opportunities to work in the community. 'I seek out orchestra-partnered schools or any groups of children that I can casually play for and talk to, for the purpose of giving students what may be their first exposure to live classical music – communities where classical ▹

The Renaissance Quartet: (*l–r*) Daniel Haas, Randall Goosby, Jeremiah Blacklow and Jameel Martin

music is not part of people's way of life, students who don't have access to regular concerts, to instruments or teachers. I play, tell them a little about my story and establish common ground between myself and the students. I don't want to do what they call a teabag visit – you drop in, you stay a couple of minutes, then you take it out and throw it away. Ideally, I'd like to create a lasting relationship, whether it's between myself personally and the students, or just between the orchestra and the institution.'

Goosby recently visited Jamaica with the Renaissance Quartet, made up of himself and three good friends: violinist Jeremiah Blacklow, violist Jameel Martin and cellist Daniel Hass. There, the musicians met an inspiring group of students. 'We were invited to give a benefit concert for the girls' high school where my girlfriend had been a student,' he says. 'She still teaches there and runs a music programme. We went into schools and played Mozart and Beethoven and we'd ask the students simple questions like, "Does this piece make you think of something?" We got such emotionally mature and astute answers, things like, "This is music that wants to be happy and is not." It served to remind us of why we do this work, how important it is to communicate something effectively and honestly to the students.' It's not just the students who benefit, he says. 'It does a lot for me and my colleagues as performers because it forces us to play in a hyper-descriptive way. It reminds you that even in a big concert hall where most people know every note you're playing, you need to make an effort to describe the music as clearly and vividly as you can.'

Goosby's relationship with the violin was kindled by his mother, who, having been brought up in Japan, was not impressed by music provision in America. 'It's kind of a toss-up whether you'll find a music education programme in a school in the US,' says Goosby. 'She wanted to be sure that we [Goosby has two younger siblings] had the ability and the option to express ourselves on an instrument.' Goosby began Suzuki lessons aged seven, with his mother learning alongside him. 'Suzuki does a wonderful job of creating a foundation of discipline, and parental involvement makes a huge difference,' he says. 'My mum was always in the room when I was practising, almost until I left for college, and now she's one of my most trusted confidants.' Goosby rapidly outgrew his Suzuki teacher and his mother found another teacher, Routa Kroumovitch-Gomez, at Stetson University near Daytona Beach, Florida, about an hour and a half's drive from their home in Jacksonville. Goosby made his debut with the Jacksonville Symphony at the age of nine.

The family moved to Memphis, Tennessee, and Goosby enrolled with Philippe Quint, the Juilliard-trained Russian-born American soloist who had given him a couple of lessons at a festival in Colorado in 2007. One weekend a month he and his mother flew to New York for lessons, which Goosby admits became a pretty punishing schedule for someone barely in their teens. It produced results, though – in 2010 he became the youngest-ever winner (aged 13) at the junior competition of the Sphinx Organization (founded to support young black and Latinx string players), and performed at a Young People's Concert at Lincoln Center with the New York Philharmonic.

Quint encouraged him to apply for the Perlman Music Program, the seven-week intensive summer music school founded by Perlman's wife Toby on Shelter Island, New York. After impressing the maestro, Goosby was one of the rare students to be invited to study with Perlman year-round at his Manhattan home, travelling regularly from Memphis, where he was still at high school. He joined the Juilliard junior programme and went on to a complete a degree there studying with Perlman and Cho. 'I studied with them through all four years of undergraduate studies. I switched to different teachers for my master's degree [Donald Weilerstein and Laurie Smukler], but Ms Cho is always that voice in the back of my head,' he says. ▹

DANIEL PERALES

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Goosby (*second left*) with Itzhak Perlman (*centre*) and (*l–r*) cellist Sterling Elliott, violist Ao Peng and pianist Sahun Hong in 2019

Goosby at his graduation from the Juilliard School in 2018

Has he been able to translate the advice of these great teachers into lessons for his own students? 'I try to keep hold of a very simple concept that Mr Perlman presented to me in one of my very first lessons on the programme, when I was 14. I was playing something quite challenging and was asking questions like, "How do I make this first shift sound cleaner? How do I make this bow stroke a little more solid?" And at a certain point in the lesson he put the music down and asked me, "What do you think about this music? How does it make you feel?" And I said, "Wow, I don't know that I've thought about it." And his response was, "Well, if you don't have any particular thoughts or feelings about the piece, what's the point of the technique? If you don't have a message, you don't have a story, an image that you're trying to convey, then the technique is meaningless. It's there to serve the music, not the other way round.'

Goosby thinks he's lucky to have had a relatively normal childhood, rather than being treated like a prodigy. 'While my mother insisted I had to do my three hours of practice, my dad encouraged me to go outside and play with friends as soon as practice was over.' Now he's found a way to combine work and social life – his regular recital pianist is a friend, Zhu Wang, and in 2021 he and his three friends formed the Renaissance Quartet. 'We grew up together on the Perlman programme. We've known each other for over a decade, and whether we're performing or not, whenever we're in the city we always just get together and make music. If it weren't for all the great friends I've made and great collaborators that I've met, I don't know if I'd still be playing music,' he says.

Goosby in 2010

'I NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS A WUNDERKIND. I DIDN'T REALLY FEEL AS IF THERE WAS ANYTHING SPECIAL OR DIFFERENT ABOUT MY SKILLS.'

'It is that sort of connection and empathy that's required from playing with others that keeps me coming back.'

He says he didn't have to make an awkward transition mentally from prodigy to great concert artist. 'I never thought of myself as a wunderkind. I didn't really feel as if there was anything special or different about my skills. I was always able to look around and find something in someone else's playing that really inspired or motivated me.' Career-wise, though, the transition to sought-after soloist happened very quickly. 'Before the pandemic, for example, I was still a master's student, and I had just won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. This was 2018 and I had some smaller recitals in towns around the country. I was just beginning to hit the road and start performing, but I wouldn't have called it a career. And suddenly after the pandemic I had commercial representation and management and a full schedule for the next two years. It was a bit shocking!'

Through YCAT Goosby was given a residency by LMM and named the inaugural Robey Artist. While he mentored ▷

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children from diverse backgrounds, he saw how LMM teaching partners were restoring composers and performers of colour to music history. When he signed with Decca, the repertoire choices on his first album made a bold statement of intent. *Roots* features composers such as Still, Price and Perkinson, as well as those inspired by African American culture, notably Gershwin and Dvořák. At the time, he described it as 'giving voice and paying respect to some of these artists and composers' without whom 'I probably wouldn't be here doing what I'm doing today'.

It's become part of the Goosby story – the brilliant young violinist championing composers and performers of colour. But he was brought up playing the classical canon, and his heroes also include David Oistrakh, Heifetz and, of course, Perlman. 'I think the black composers aspect of my programming has certainly blown up in the past few years,' he says. 'In classical music, especially here in the States, that's become very important to the fabric of programming. But for me it's not that sort of public-facing, performative, box-checking thing that it is for a lot of big institutions and orchestras. It's part of my story, not only something that I feel is important to me but also something that I'm able to communicate very effectively – and it's something I relate to in a different way from how I do to, say, Mozart or Beethoven. That's refreshing, not only for me but for audiences as well.'

Goosby is using a residency at the Southbank Centre in London in the 2023–24 season to look more widely at the black experience rather than just featuring African American composers. A recital at the Purcell Room in October sees him and Wang juxtaposing music by Price, Coleridge-Taylor and Still and works by Dvořák and Strauss. In January 2024, Wang again joins Goosby, this time also with violist and narrator Jameel Martin and cellist Eddie Pogossian for a programme titled Intersections – Black Music and Words. This concert offers a chance to experience a rarely heard set of songs by Previn (in collaboration with novelist Toni Morrison) in an instrumental version in which, Goosby says, he'll have to sound like a 'beautiful, almost pained soprano on the violin'. This is heard alongside music by Coleridge-Taylor and Perkinson.

> 'THE BLACK COMPOSERS ASPECT OF MY PROGRAMMING IS PART OF MY STORY... SOMETHING THAT I'M ABLE TO COMMUNICATE VERY EFFECTIVELY'

In future recitals, Goosby plans to draw on the connection between Coleridge-Taylor and Brahms, who were working roughly in the same period, as well as the connection between Strauss, Price and the former's Sonata. 'I hear a lot of Straussian influence in Price's music, whether it be the concertos or the fantasies I had the chance to record, which is harmonically adventurous music. At the same time, I'm highlighting the differences in the experiences of those two composers.'

Goosby (*centre*) with his family

His concerto engagements in 2023–4 feature Romantic giants from Bruch to Brahms, but he's excited also to be playing the Korngold Violin Concerto, 'one of my absolute favourites', in the autumn, and some Price later in the season. When we talk, Goosby is about to make his debut in South Korea and Japan, his mother's birthplace. 'She is a hundred per cent Korean but she was born and raised in Osaka, so culturally she is essentially Japanese.' He has talked about researching these different heritages in terms of their music in the same way as he has sought out African American composers. 'Obviously, that music is as much a part of me as ▹

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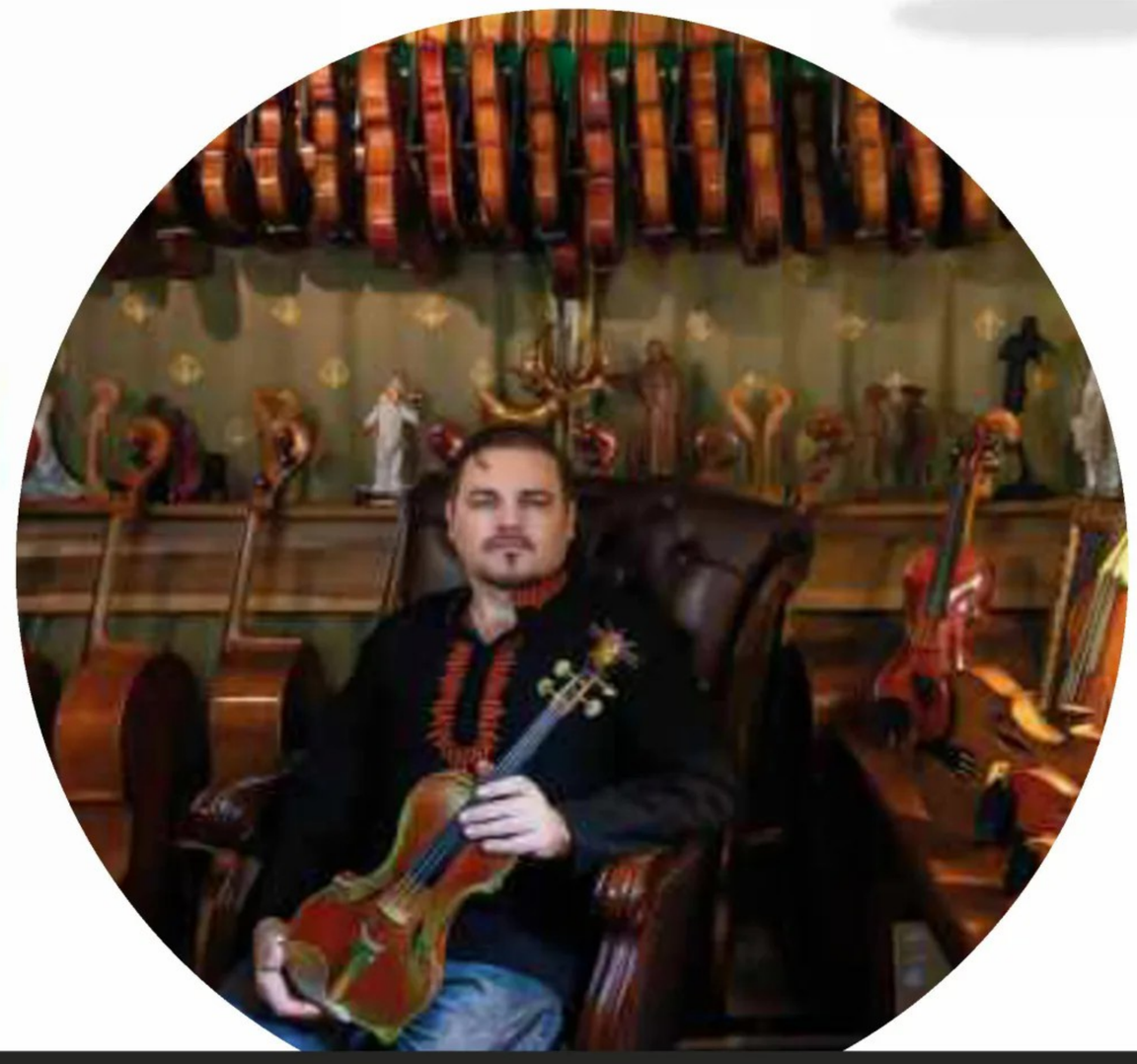

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Goosby with conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra

black music is. But I've had a lot more exposure to and experience with music by black composers and black popular music than I have with music from my mother's part of the world. It will be a fun and inspiring challenge to figure out how to weave that music into my life, not just my programming, in a really honest and meaningful way.

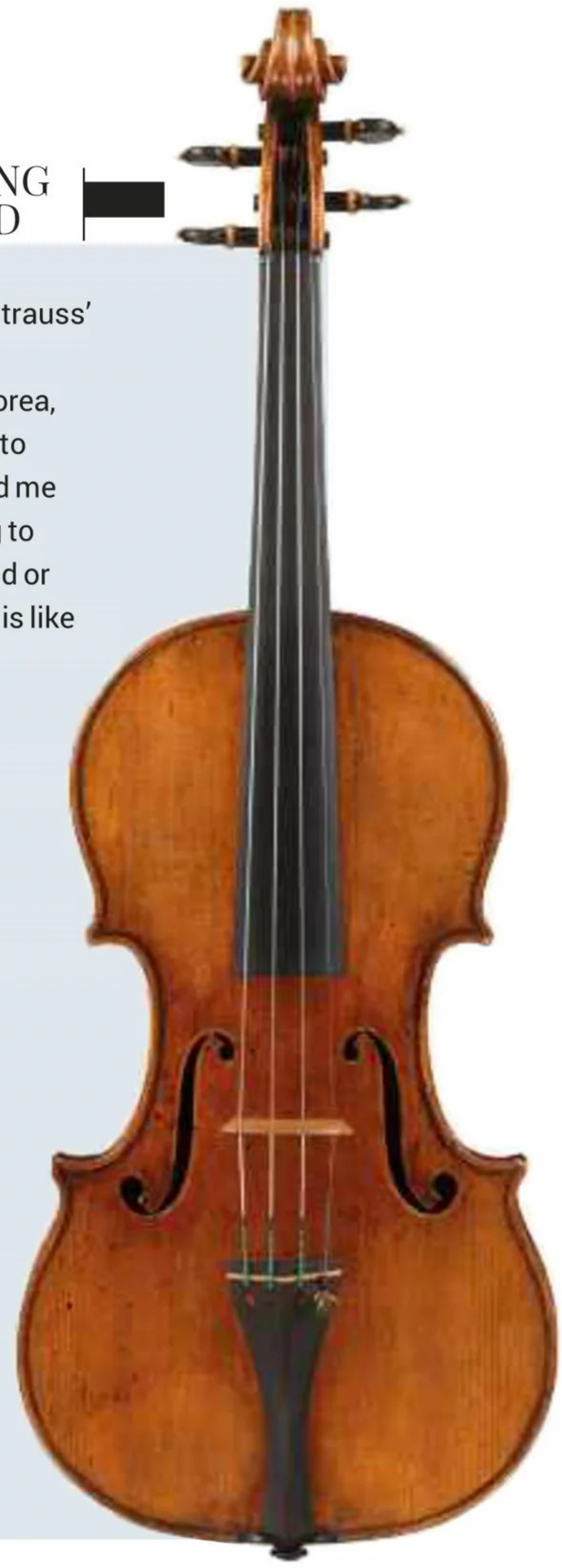
'I'm incredibly grateful for the platform that I've been given over the past few years and I hope I will be able to maintain it going forward. Not everyone can be passionate about everything; not everyone can be hell-bent on exposing people to new music, to music that should have been heard a long time ago. All it takes is one person.' Things are changing as a new generation brings their ideas and attitudes to the classical music world. 'I look around at my colleagues and we all have a similar outlook on what's important for the future, in terms of shifting the culture a bit. I'm grateful to be surrounded by that myself, but for the benefit of the rest of the world and for much of our audience, I take very serious responsibility for being an advocate in this way.' Providing exposure and access to all students who don't have music is a serious mission for a young man, but Goosby knows how to keep a work–life balance: 'Golf will persist throughout!' he declares. ●

CONCERTO PHOTO PETE CHECCHIA. PORTRAIT PHOTO OLLIE ALI. STRAD PHOTO COURTESY OF BEIN & FUSHI INC. MATTHEW TOLZMANN, PHOTOGRAPHER

GOOSBY ON GETTING TO KNOW A STRAD

'I've been playing the Cremonese 'Strauss' Stradivari of 1708, on loan from the Samsung Foundation of Culture, Korea, since January so we're still getting to know each other! A luthier once told me that whatever it is that you're trying to do physically, whether it be left-hand or right-hand technique, a great violin is like an amplifier for all of those nuances and details. I didn't really understand that fully until I started playing the Strad. The slightest little deviation in the left-hand frame or the angle of the bow, the angle of the fingers of the left hand when you put them down, can have the biggest effect on the sound. It's very comforting and inspiring to know just how many possibilities exist in an instrument of this calibre.

'I've been searching for a great bow for about a year now and I think I've tried just about every 19th-century French bow maker, but I'm still trying to find the right fit.'



Billy Tobenkin in his teaching studio

THE DEEP END

Billy Tobenkin, who began playing the cello aged 25, explores his own experience of learning Bach's Prelude in G major after only a few months, and why he believes it is beneficial for adult learners to dive straight into 'grown-up' repertoire – offering tips on how to proceed

Picking up the cello as an adult can be a bit like living in one of those small frontier towns in the days of the Wild West. There are rules, regulations and even a sheriff (your teacher), but things can often feel a bit more lawless and unstructured than life in the big city. Out here there's no telling what can happen next, especially when it comes to choosing repertoire.

Having started the cello from scratch at 25, I found myself in such a situation. After a few months of hard work and rapid progress, I asked my teacher if I could start learning the famous Prelude from Bach's Cello Suite no.1 in G major BWV1007, to which she agreed.

It was at this point that a strange chasm seemed to open before me. Here I was, working on a bucket-list piece after having started on the instrument only recently. Part of me was, understandably, absolutely thrilled to be working on a real cello masterpiece, but there was another part of me that felt a bit disappointed. I felt that I was likely skipping steps and breaking some unwritten law of what a real player's journey should look like. I wondered if it was in my best interests as a serious student of the cello to be working on a piece like the Prelude so early on, and I yearned for the structure, rigidity and predictability of the standard syllabus that children enjoy.

Looking back now, I can say that the benefits of learning the Bach Prelude 'too early' far outweighed the costs. It was an exhilarating experience, and it stoked the fires of my passion to turn myself into a cellist and a musician.

In the case of adult learners, I believe it's necessary to reimagine the repertoire and introduce 'real' pieces of music at a far earlier point in their journey than is the current standard. However, unlike the slapdash approach I took to conquering repertoire through sheer grit and dogged repetition, I want to propose a hybrid approach of having your cake and eating it too: working on musicality and technique through careful deconstruction of the piece.

The Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript of the Prelude in G major BWV1007

IN THE CASE OF ADULT LEARNERS, I BELIEVE IT IS NECESSARY TO REIMAGINE THE REPERTOIRE AND INTRODUCE 'REAL' PIECES FAR EARLIER

EAT YOUR VEGETABLES!

In order to understand the benefit of choosing the right repertoire for one's musical journey, I think it's important to highlight the major differences between child and adult learners of the cello. With children, there is usually no rush to start them on 'real' repertoire during the first year or two. Often, they progress through a number of etude books and student pieces that systematically build their technical foundation. By the time they are playing standard repertoire, they have been 'eating their vegetables' for years.

This system works for several reasons. For one, children have plenty of time to take the longer, more thorough route towards technical development. And, more importantly, most are *not* starting their journey with a burning desire to make a beautiful sound on the cello and a bucket list of dream pieces they hope to play one day. Thus, there is nothing inherently frustrating or unfulfilling about working through pieces that lack musical depth.

To be clear, I'm not arguing that adult learners don't need to eat their vegetables – they absolutely do. What I'm saying is that the adult learner has musical dietary needs that are different from those of the typical child. We tend to think that, compared with children, adults are at a complete learning disadvantage when in reality they possess a number of strengths. We have fully formed problem-solving capabilities, patience, strong attention to detail and the ability to maintain focus (to name a few). Correctly harnessed, these strengths can lead to incredible results. However, if an adult learner is forced to join a pre-paved track designed for children, these strengths can quickly become stifled. It's easy to find yourself eight months into your journey, playing one children's piece after another while the repertoire you love (and that inspired you to play the cello in the first ▹

ALEXA MILLER GALLO

place) seems to fall further and further away over the horizon with each passing week.

For those of us starting the cello (or, indeed, any other bowed stringed instrument) later in life, I believe there are two aspects that we should start working on right away to get the most out of our journey. The first is building a beautiful sound on whatever we are playing from day one, and the second is working on having musical intention behind each bow stroke.

This early focus on sound quality and musicality would be inappropriate for most five-year-olds, but it is precisely what's needed to help most adults thrive. If you ask a hundred adult learners why they decided to pick up the cello, the answer you'll keep hearing is that they want to make the sounds that drew them to the instrument in the first place. For adults, sound is everything. And within that umbrella of beautiful sound is being able to express yourself musically.

By introducing a piece like the Bach Prelude (or any bucket-list piece) earlier on in the learning process, one can help facilitate this focus on sound and musicianship since it's more likely that the adult learner will feel mentally and emotionally connected to the piece itself. And when it comes to reimagining the repertoire, I think it's completely acceptable to learn a small excerpt of an otherwise out-of-reach bucket-list piece. It could be the slower, second theme of your favourite concerto, such as the Dvořák (**figure 1**), or the gorgeous Meno mosso theme from the final page of Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata (**figure 2**) – as adults we can extract little portions of our most cherished repertoire to work on with the understanding that we are not aiming to learn an entire piece of music but using a small, inspiring excerpt to build our technique. It's a bit of a stretch to hope that an adult learner will feel emotionally invested when learning *The Happy Farmer* – though it is possible.

IT'S A BIT OF A STRETCH TO HOPE THAT AN ADULT LEARNER WILL FEEL EMOTIONALLY INVESTED WHEN LEARNING *THE HAPPY FARMER*

In my case, working on the Bach Prelude made me feel more motivated to express myself musically because I was playing a real piece of music that seemed to me to have emotional depth and nuance in the notes themselves. The Prelude also happens to be an ideal piece to learn 'too early', because while it requires true mastery to play it beautifully, most of the notes are relatively accessible for a newer player if approached in the right manner. ▹

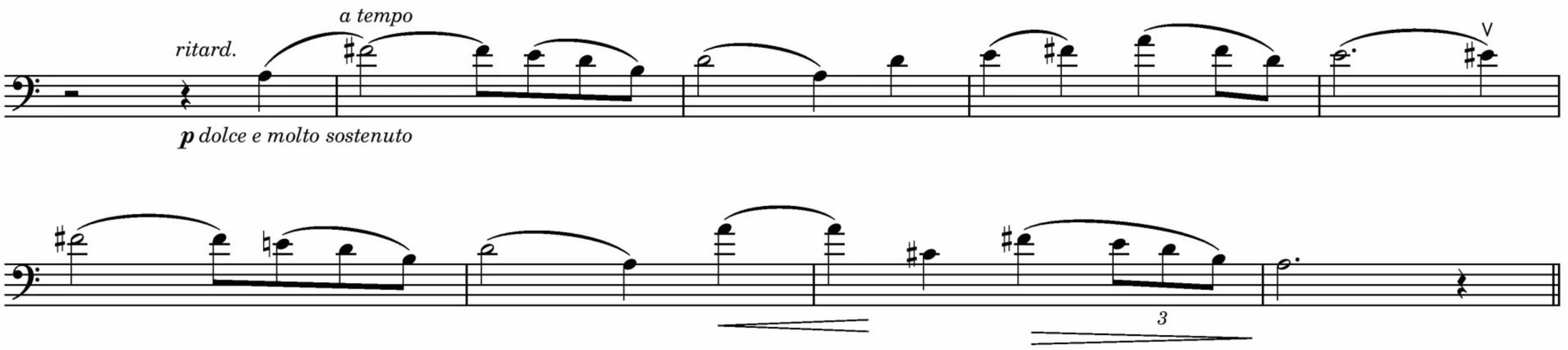


FIGURE 1 Dvořák's Cello Concerto in B minor op.104: first movement, second theme

FIGURE 2 The Meno mosso theme from the fourth movement of Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata in G minor op.19

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LEARNING THE PRELUDE

Before I dive into how a newer adult learner should approach the Prelude, I'd like to share how I actually did it all those years ago, because it's a wonderful example of how *not* to learn such a piece.

After purchasing the sheet music and bringing it to my lesson, I watched as my teacher added a handful of important fingerings and walked me through the opening bars. Upon getting home, I opened the music, set it down on my stand and started trying to play it at a slow tempo following the marked bowings. If I stumbled, I would pick myself up and try to forge ahead until eventually I got to a section that was so difficult I had to stop entirely. Then I would go back to the start of the piece and try to push my way through to the previous stopping point, often stumbling in all the same places. After days of struggling with the usual bowing pattern (three semiquavers on a down bow, followed by five on separate bows), which was sending my bow out to the tip relentlessly, I eventually settled on trying to play the whole piece slurring every four semiquavers. While I enjoyed myself immensely and felt as if I was making progress for all of my effort, I can say without a doubt that I left a huge amount of development on the table.

Here's how I suggest adult learners approach the Prelude if they feel the piece is a major step up for them in terms of technical difficulty (see **figure 3**). They should start by (**a**) reimagining the semiquavers as crotchets and setting a metronome to ♩ = 40. They then try the first two notes of the piece on separate bow strokes, starting on a down bow (**b**). The goal is to pull a beautiful, rich open G string with a sticky, tugging contact, taking care not to allow the sound to skid out. At the end of that stroke, they'll go for a smooth string-crossing on the bow change and a beautiful, rich open D string. Everything should be legatissimo. Once that is comfortable, the next two notes are added, continuing with separate bow strokes. The learner slowly works up towards playing the first bar of the piece with a rich sound. To speed up the tempo, the metronome is cranked up by around five beats per minute at a time while the player still aims for a beautiful, legato sound and ensures that the bow stroke remains essentially unchanged. The only difference is that with each tempo increase, less bow is used on each stroke, which makes the notes happen more quickly.

> IT'S IMPERATIVE FOR AN ADULT LEARNER TO DEVELOP A RICH SOUND AND CONFIDENT BOW ARM FROM THE START

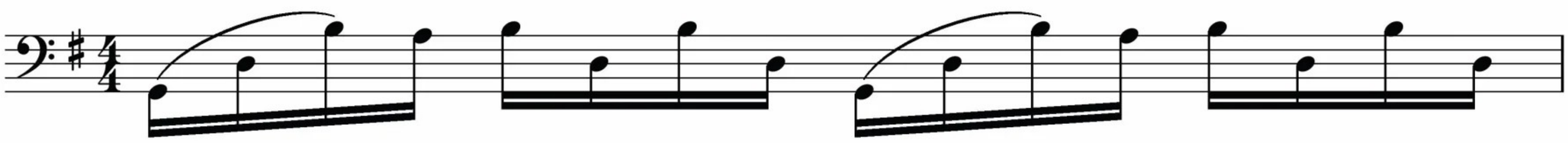
It's imperative for an adult learner to develop a rich sound and a free, confident bow arm from the start. Once the metronome marking has doubled from its original setting, the tempo should be fast enough for the player to start hearing the larger phrasing between each eight-note pattern and they can start trying to phrase towards and away from the most important note in each eight-note group.

Once the player feels relatively comfortable playing the opening bars of the Prelude with single bow strokes at different tempos, they should return the metronome to approximately 55bpm and start working on the passage with two notes to a bow (still playing the semiquavers as crotchets). This simple adjustment for someone early in their cello journey will make those same bars feel like a completely different piece of music, with a whole new set of three-dimensional relationships between the two arms. One could also work towards four notes slurred, keeping in mind that a longer number of slurred notes would necessitate a faster starting tempo on the metronome.

Instead of running the gamut of all the conceivable bowing patterns one could superimpose upon the Prelude, as a teacher I would likely stop at four notes per bow and maybe at most venture into the commonly used bowing pattern mentioned above (three semiquavers on a down bow, followed by five on separate bows). The reason for this constraint is that ▹

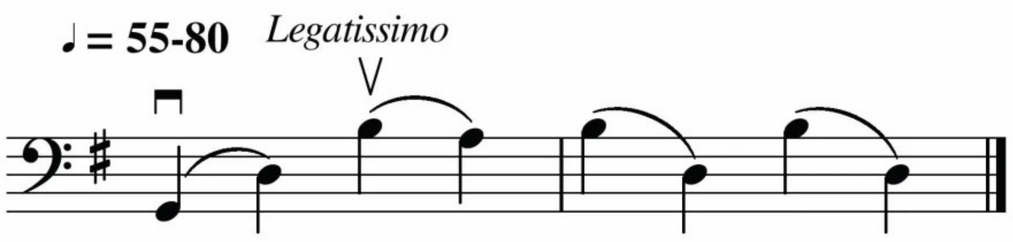
FIGURE 3 Approaches for practising the Prelude in G major

Bar 1 of the original



(a) Long legato bow strokes with a beautiful, rich tone

(b) Maintain a beautiful, rich tone with smooth string-crossings



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instead of turning the Prelude into an exhaustive project in bow hand dexterity, I want to focus on beauty of sound and injecting musical intent into each bow stroke. If those two aspects are really to be the focal point, then it's important that the adult learner is not overwhelmed with too many technical challenges at once. In my experience as a learner, I found that the more I had to focus on multiple technical challenges, the less I was able to listen for tone and focus on sculpting a musical line with the bow.

Another suggestion would be to conquer a small number of bars at a time. Returning to my original efforts on the Prelude as a beginner who had never practised a musical instrument before, I remember feeling that it would be a waste of time to focus only on a few bars (or even a few lines) of music in one practice session. As a result, I always tried to process more bars of music than I was truly prepared to do, and inevitably I would let a number of issues slide because I felt rushed to give attention to each bar of music. It felt like I was building a skyscraper with wet cement – nothing felt solidified, and so the further I got into a piece during a practice run, the worse my results would be in terms of tone, accuracy and coordination between the two hands.

By deconstructing Bach's G major Prelude into nutritious bites that are digestible, adult learners can indeed have their cake and eat it, working on a bucket-list piece while building a rock-solid technical foundation for their musical journey.

DEVELOPING THE RIGHT MINDSET

Harnessing the right mindset can sometimes be as important as receiving the right cello instruction. Whenever I first approached a piece of repertoire that seemed to be a stretch technically, I liked to think of myself as a house painter and my first attempt at learning the piece as a primer coat. Let's say I worked on the Bach Prelude for three months with my teacher before moving on to another piece. I would count those three months as one giant primer coat, and before I returned to add my first coat of real paint, I was going to let everything dry out for a long period of months.

Thinking in this manner takes a lot of pressure off, in terms of the adult learner judging their efforts overly critically against the recordings of the piece which they already know and love. Of course, they want to do their best and be proud of their work, but in a situation like the one I'm describing, the end product of their efforts is not always representative of how much they have actually progressed and developed. I should point out that this approach to learning the repertoire will be very challenging if the learner tends to be a perfectionist. But on the other hand, allowing a stifling, uncontrolled amount of perfectionism to permeate one's cello efforts as an adult learner is a recipe for frustration and abandonment of the journey altogether.

Another aspect of mindset that I should mention concerns the incredible boost in motivation and passion I felt for practising whenever I was allowed to learn one of my bucket-list pieces (even when doing so was a major stretch technically). Most adult learners are busy people. They are balancing work, family obligations and other hobbies and activities. To add something like the cello can be a challenge because it requires consistent effort to make progress. For many adults, there are days when 15 to 30 minutes of practice is all that will fit into their schedule. Getting to work on a masterpiece (even in deconstructed form) could be the incentive needed to walk over to the cello, sit down and squeeze out those 30 minutes of quality work instead of thinking, 'What's the point, anyway? I'll just do it on a day when I have more time.'

I SHOULD MENTION THE BOOST IN MOTIVATION AND PASSION I FELT WHENEVER I WAS ALLOWED TO LEARN ONE OF MY BUCKET-LIST PIECES

When it comes to adult learners of the cello, I believe that the sky's the limit in terms of how much progress can be made. However, in order to thrive, they need to work on pieces that foster their passion for making music and their enjoyment of the sound they are making. Doing so will help them make playing the cello a permanent part of who they are and what they do. ●

ALEXA MILLER GALLO

TRAINING AN APPRENTICE

Sarah Kluge (*left*) shows intern Jordan Smith how to sharpen a blade

FIRST PRINCIPLES

When a professional luthier takes on someone new, the amount of learning needed to become a trusted employee can be overwhelming. **Sarah Kluge** explains her method of training an apprentice from scratch, including an essential list of dos and don'ts

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Over the past two decades of violin making, I have become a professional learner. In my role as head of a workshop, I need to work alongside my colleagues while at the same time maintaining the role of team leader. In the process, I have discovered how this mindset of leader–partner translates from industry to industry, and from teacher to student. (Given my other role as a trainer of horses, I've even realised how it extends to different species!) Before training as a restorer more than 20 years ago, I worked for a time in human resources where I was exposed to matters such as 'training scales' and the ideas I explain in this article. They have helped me during my own apprenticeship, through to owning my own shop and my participation on the board of the Violin Society of America. I also found it helpful when I was setting up my own musical charity.

I believe that the rules and guidelines described here can inspire learners to participate fully in workshop matters, and grow more quickly by preparing the way both psychologically and developmentally.

Make it hard to do the wrong thing

The basic purpose of this principle is to be able to leave your team alone while they are on task. Proper care and attention make it harder to do the wrong things: for instance, cleaning and environmental preparation will help to prevent accidents of slipping. So, add a mat and keep the work surfaces clean. It is now more difficult to do the wrong thing. Finally: don't use punishment to 'make the wrong things hard'.

This is the first principle for a reason. All the other rules you introduce should support this one, and it encompasses some of the most basic principles. Always announce when using power tools; always label a customer's case and fittings; always set expectations for the customer before they leave, and so on. Always support your work.

Don't let things build up

Any luthier will know that a workshop can be a place of tension; maybe customers have spent too long waiting to be served, for instance. As soon as the immediate difficulty is over and done with, you need to give yourself a breather to relax and support yourself. Letting things build up will just make it easier to do the wrong thing (see above). And once someone's behaviour has changed, let it go! Don't expect future failure or that is what you will get.

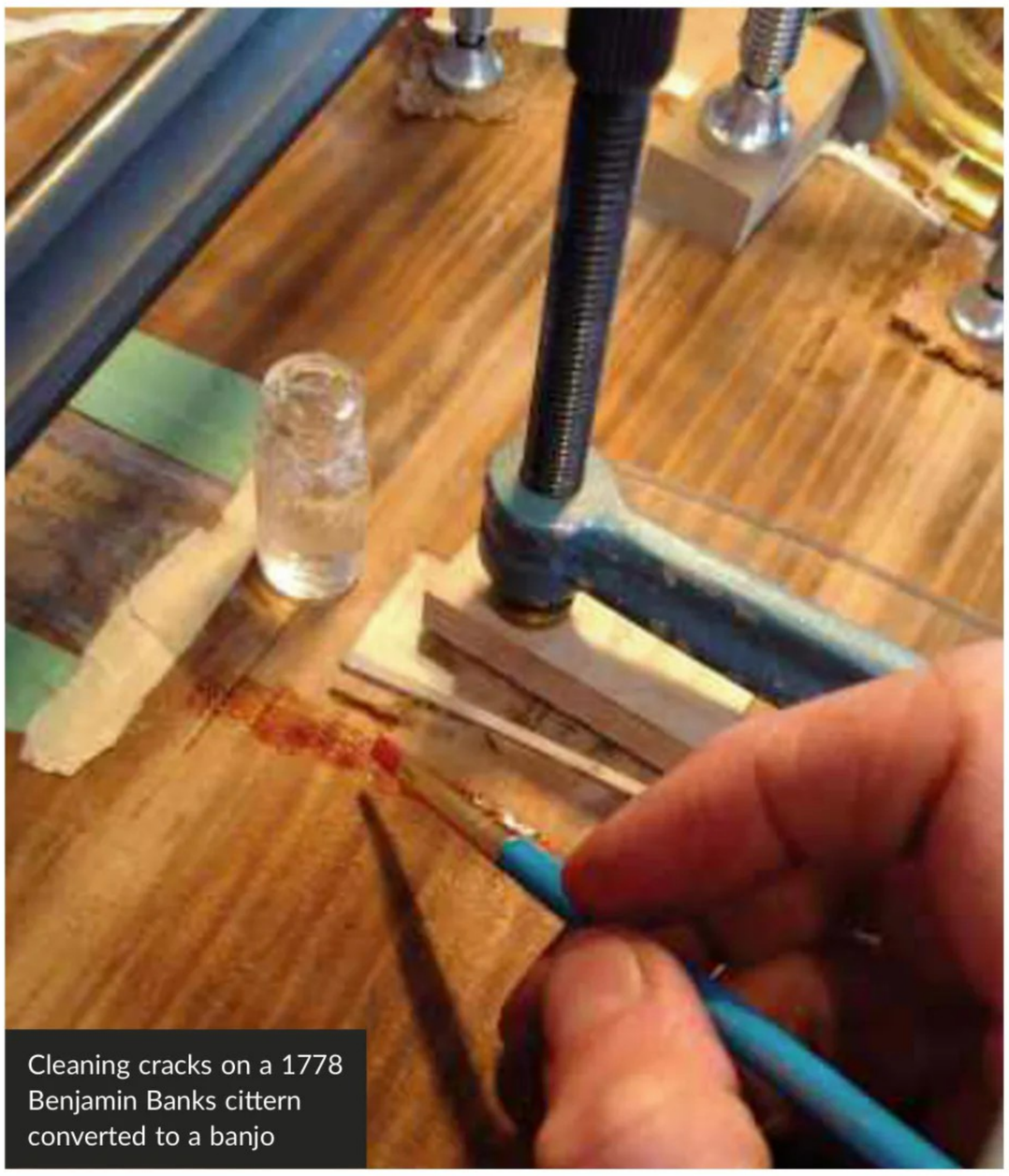
Create a tool before you use it

When solving a problem, from dry-clamping to counterpart design, you first need to ensure the tool you're using is fully functional. It's actually better to do nothing than to integrate the wrong tool, or use it at the wrong time. Furthermore, at the beginning of an apprenticeship, projects are often passed around. Once you're sure all the tools work, be certain that it's clear which team member is responsible for each part of the process. Transparency and accountability are the watchwords here: everyone involved needs to understand the 'what' and the 'how'. (The 'why' comes later.)

Timing matters

Don't call people out on their mistakes in public. Don't use force. Don't be conflict-avoidant. Instead, give cues as you go that ensure trust and dependability. Communicate clearly and consistently. Try to break your task down into several steps, so the learner can engage with a choose-to-learn mindset. This principle is very important in teaching the team how to respond positively to your leadership, especially in stressful circumstances. ▹

SARAH KLUGE



Cleaning cracks on a 1778 Benjamin Banks cittern converted to a banjo

FRUSTRATION AND FEAR OF FAILURE CAN SHUT PEOPLE DOWN OR CAUSE GROSS, EVEN DANGEROUS, OVER-REACTIONS

Apply the opposite
This isn't the same as putting dark strings on a bright fiddle at all. Rather, it's to do with action and reaction. Be the release of stress, not the cause, as you urge your colleagues to persevere with the job. Immediately before the fight-or-flight response kicks in, we look for a friend.

The Pac-Man method to purposeful perseverance
When you get something wrong, return to the absolute beginning and start all over again. When your apprentice doesn't understand something, be ready to explain it again from first principles. Slow is smooth; smooth is fast. Taking the time up front will lead to more efficiency.

Choose where you work and where you rest
This is an amazing foundational tool to avoid burnout and improve stamina. Lunch breaks are away from the bench. Phone breaks should be away from the bench. Meetings are away from the bench. Employee choice in the matter is key. You don't have to step away to be productive, but could doing so improve your quality of life, work output, or ability to focus? Eventually you should be able to walk into the shop and be instantly energised by the vibe in your healthy space.

They need to know the answer before you ask the question
The answer should always lie in what they've already been taught. Again, timing matters. Don't surprise someone while working unless it's absolutely necessary to stop them and redirect. Be mindful and redirect fearful thoughts, so that interns will look for answers rather than a way out. And then use tact, grace, respect and fairness. Set clear expectations and a single purpose for each step, and include a pause point. Lay out clear 'pass' and 'fail' criteria, including a margin for error, and points where technique can be interpreted. Specify where it can't.

Most people have baggage about what they don't know. Be the first person, finally, to teach them how to learn.

Isolate, separate, recombine
Any time you are asking an apprentice to do two or more things at once, they need to know them perfectly, and separately. When you put them together and it doesn't work, you mentally need to isolate the one that is not working. Separate it out and correct the issue before moving on.

Don't let a trainee's predictable behaviours following failure affect you personally. Your staff members would do it correctly if they really understood what, how and why. It's you who can help them find and fix the disconnect – providing they care about the job anyway.

Frustration and fear of failure can shut people down or cause gross, even dangerous, over-reactions. Result: wasted potential.

Anticipation is your best friend or your worst enemy
Luthiers are masters of anticipation. Knowing when to enhance it and when to suppress it is a key element of training.

Work with the people you have
Do what is needed without holding on to hang-ups or fearing future results. Stay positive, stay present. Accepting failure and allowing yourself and others to be authentic builds trust.

No two days are the same. Take experiences at face value and embrace that moment in time.

Gratitude
Finally, actively seek ways to acknowledge a job well done. Develop a culture of gratitude and service with all those around you.

An essential tool in my workshop is the project management software ClickUp. It's incredible for all kinds of tasks, from setting deadlines (it actually reminds me of them), sending intake forms to customers, photodocumenting work, and organising what's in the shop and who has responsibility for what.

I have workspaces and categories split into six thorough training tracks:

1. Intern
2. Assistant
3. Worthy Apprentice
4. Fearless Apprentice
5. Appointable Apprentice
6. Partner Apprentice ▹

SARAH KLUGE

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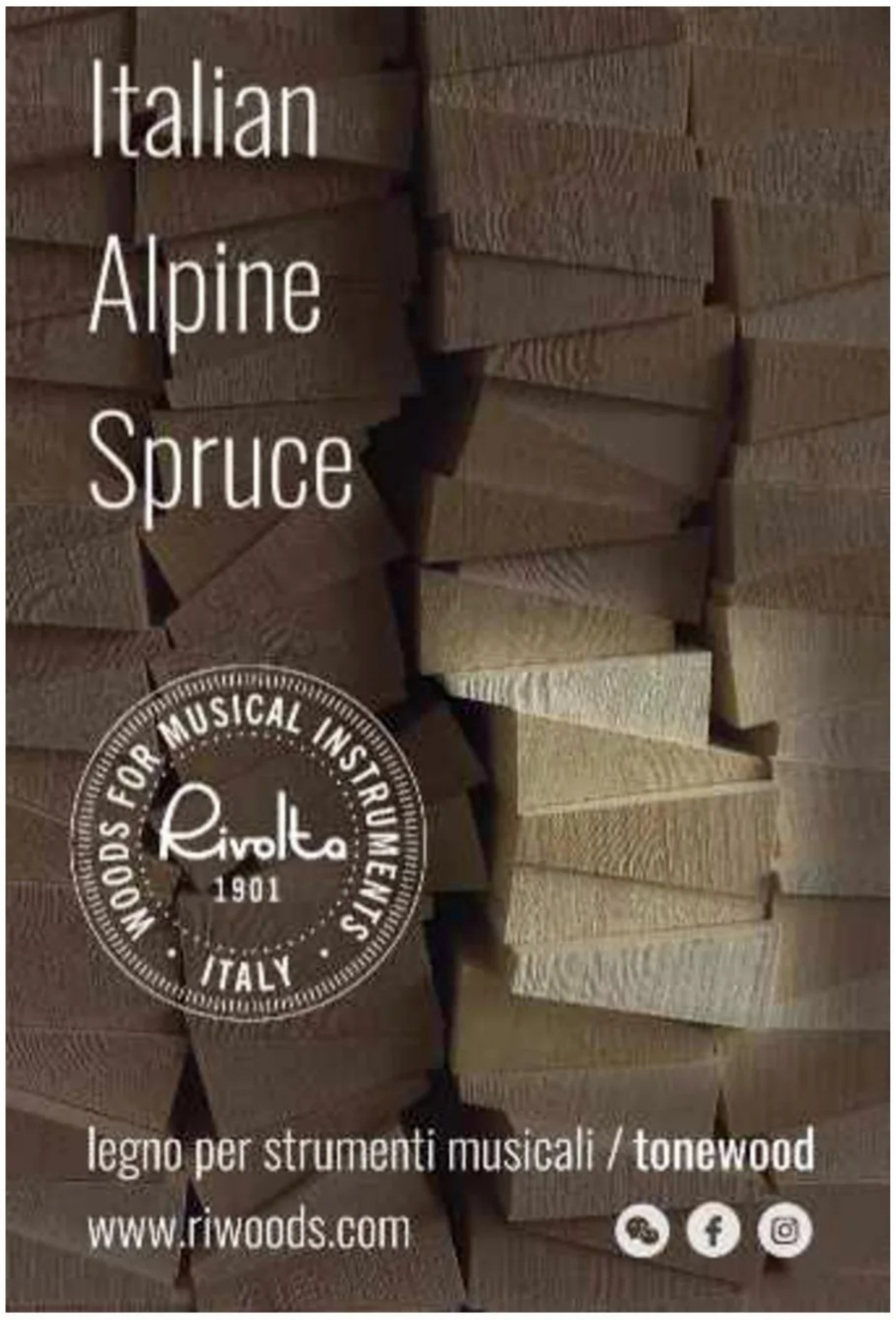

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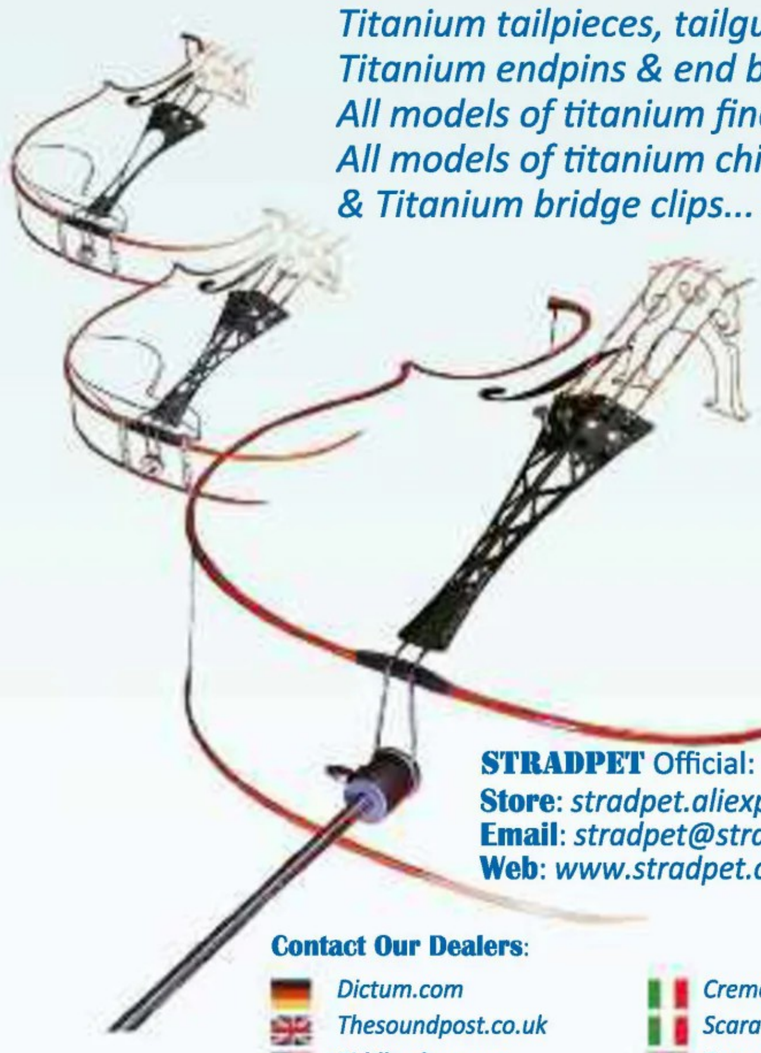

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After that, they go elsewhere to ensure well-rounded skills or earn 'journeyman' status. When they graduate to each level, they receive a leather badge for their apron, which they receive in a little ceremony.

I try to structure each day with three things: something new of interest; something the trainee can already do; and something doggedly rigid to be done exactly as I specify. In my opinion, it's important to have that balance, as it militates against burnout and frustration. I've built structured training time into each day (in theory), plus I will be able to walk away and do my own work.

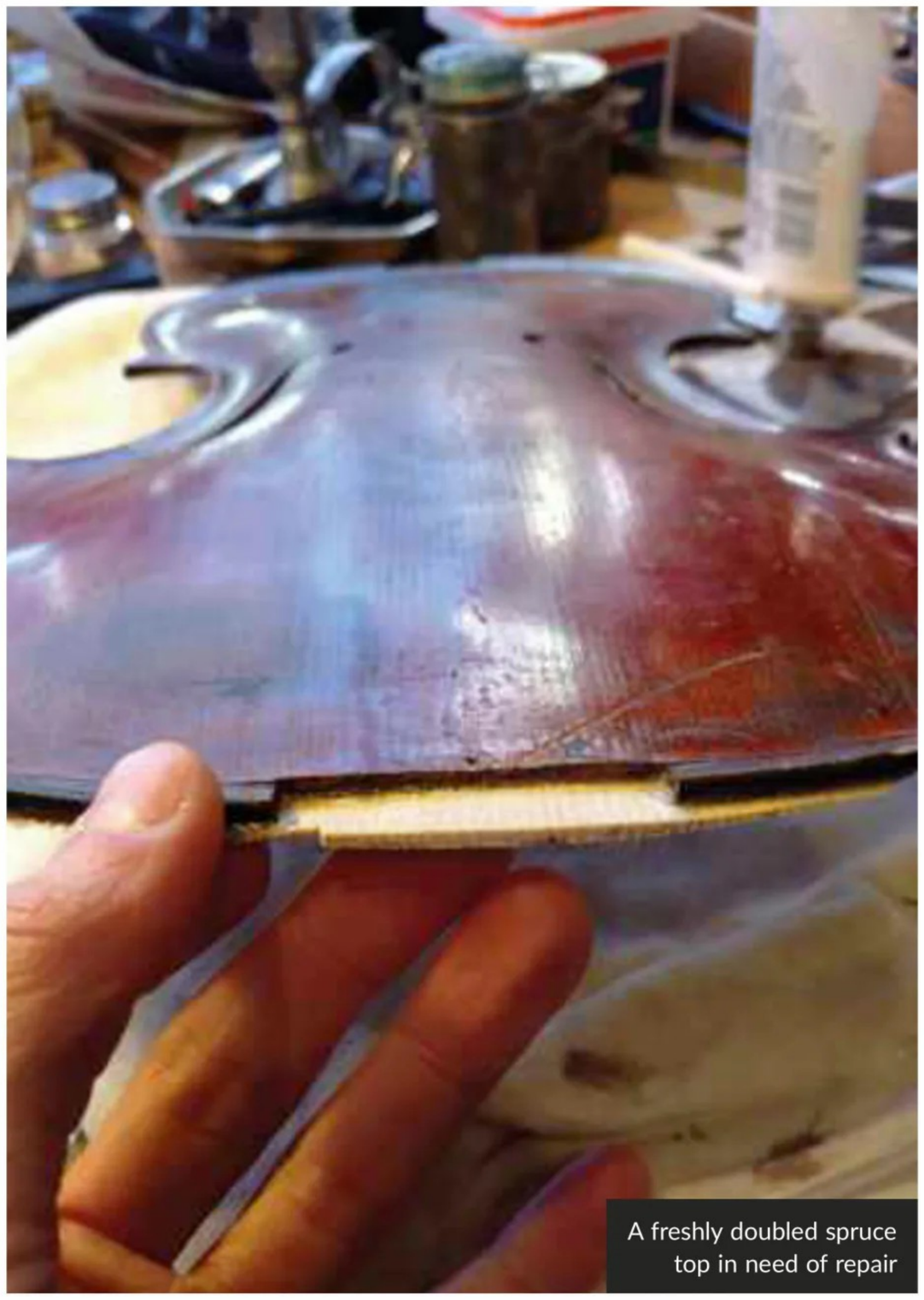
I start by including **interns** on ClickUp training. It's written out and there are videos. They start by making an instrument inventory of non-profit weekly repairs, work on our database and, when appropriate, help generate posts on social media. As time progresses they start cleaning and vacuuming out cases. This helps them learn to spot bow bugs and treat cases and instruments appropriately. They are trained in how to hold and interact with instruments, our shop's vocabulary. They are short-term members of the team, sometimes coming in less than once a week. So clarity, purpose and process are key to being able to hand over work at any stage.

Assistants should be able to help with shipping and shop cleaning. I allow them access to tools and pigments, and let them walk in the workshop so they can see projects mid-flow. They begin to make what they can of tools they'll need with the use of my shop resources. Alex Schmer (who has since worked his way up to Fearless Apprentice) started with a tool case, an apron and clamps. I also show them how to use Japanese water stones for sharpening, and give them a fundamental understanding of tool usage and safety, even though tools might still be foreign at this point (assistants might still only come in once a week).

Besides watching luthiers work, the first step to advancement is taking an inventory and making template measurements. This enforces so much of our culture and really demonstrates what the shop stands for, particularly in terms of the level of respect we show each instrument, customer and project. 'Templating' also involves the use of precision tools and has built-in quality control; there are even built-in reference points where they need to stop and assess their work before moving ahead. This way, their eyes can become accustomed to the minutiae. Over weeks and months we introduce assistants to all aspects of shop life, in accessible chunks. Ideally, everything is simplified so new tasks build on what's gone before. For example, tools needed for a certain step will first be made, bought and organised by section, before being used in that particular stage. Certain parts of set-up, for instance, are discussed and trained in an 'I do half, you do half' process. More advanced aspects of set-up are saved for later training. But all the way, the sets of tools and order of events are repeated, as with every other part of the system – broken down tool by tool, step by step, according to the training scale.

PHOTOS SARAH KLUGE

Preparations for varnish retouching



A freshly doubled spruce top in need of repair

ALL THE WAY, THE SETS OF TOOLS AND ORDER OF EVENTS ARE REPEATED, BROKEN DOWN TOOL BY TOOL, STEP BY STEP, ACCORDING TO THE TRAINING SCALE

Now we can begin training a **Worthy Apprentice** by showing them how to fit a button, then adjust pegs, trim and shape peg ends, and add notches to the bridge and nut. We discuss playability and function, and how these will be elements to look at (in that order) when every instrument comes in the shop. Next we do bridge contours and archings, discussion of string materials, and how form follows function. We discover why we sometimes use files and abrasive paper in contrast to the majority of times when we use hand planes. Worthy Apprentice learns with clear pass/fail criteria. This is followed by diagnosis training, buzz chasing, cleaning stages (stopping before the use of alcohol). These are the most common things to come through, and have often been missed by previous hands. ▹

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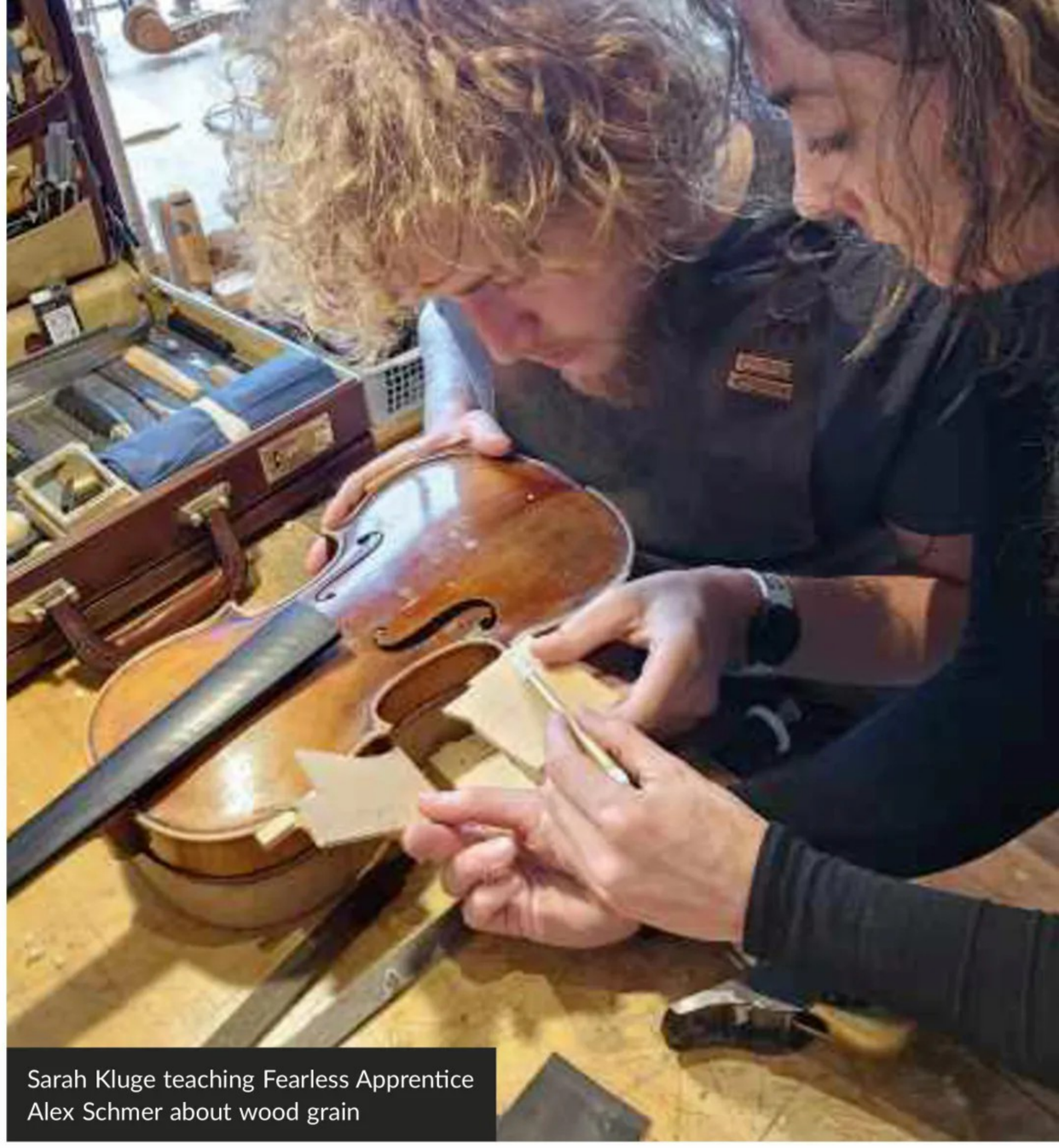


Sarah Kluge teaching Fearless Apprentice Alex Schmer about wood grain

Next we begin gluing cracks. Worthy Apprentice gets to play engineer with clamping, and then I show my own method. I explain how structural integrity must be maintained: if you find you have to force it, stop and look to find the root cause of the crack. We discuss structure and pressure points more deeply. We fit cleats, and later cut them down. We establish an order of operations in a concrete way, and learn to triangulate hypotheses through tone, structure and the movement of plates. We examine and test wood types, and learn about graduations using tapping and flexing with the hands. At this stage I also encourage apprentices to assist me with customer service and writing insurance appraisals. They begin helping me pour casts. I like an apprentice to have something in their hands while I'm serving customers (retouching a student instrument, for instance). If they're continuing to work, they can listen without feeling awkward. Plus we learn better when involving more of the brain at once.

Leather badges confirm the apprentice's current status

Worthy Apprentice is ready to move forward once their work is up to my standard 80 per cent of the time. If they are more than eight months in, you need to commit to paying them more, so they can afford to come in for 30 hours per week at a minimum. At this point, if not earlier, I share my entire notebook with them to encourage copying and note-taking. I offer my books and even assign homework. (Typically I don't pay them for that, but I do treat them to Friday meals!)

Next we start on fingerboard work; fitting then making soundposts; more in-depth retouching and tonal checks;

I LIKE AN APPRENTICE TO HAVE SOMETHING IN THEIR HANDS WHILE I'M SERVING CUSTOMERS

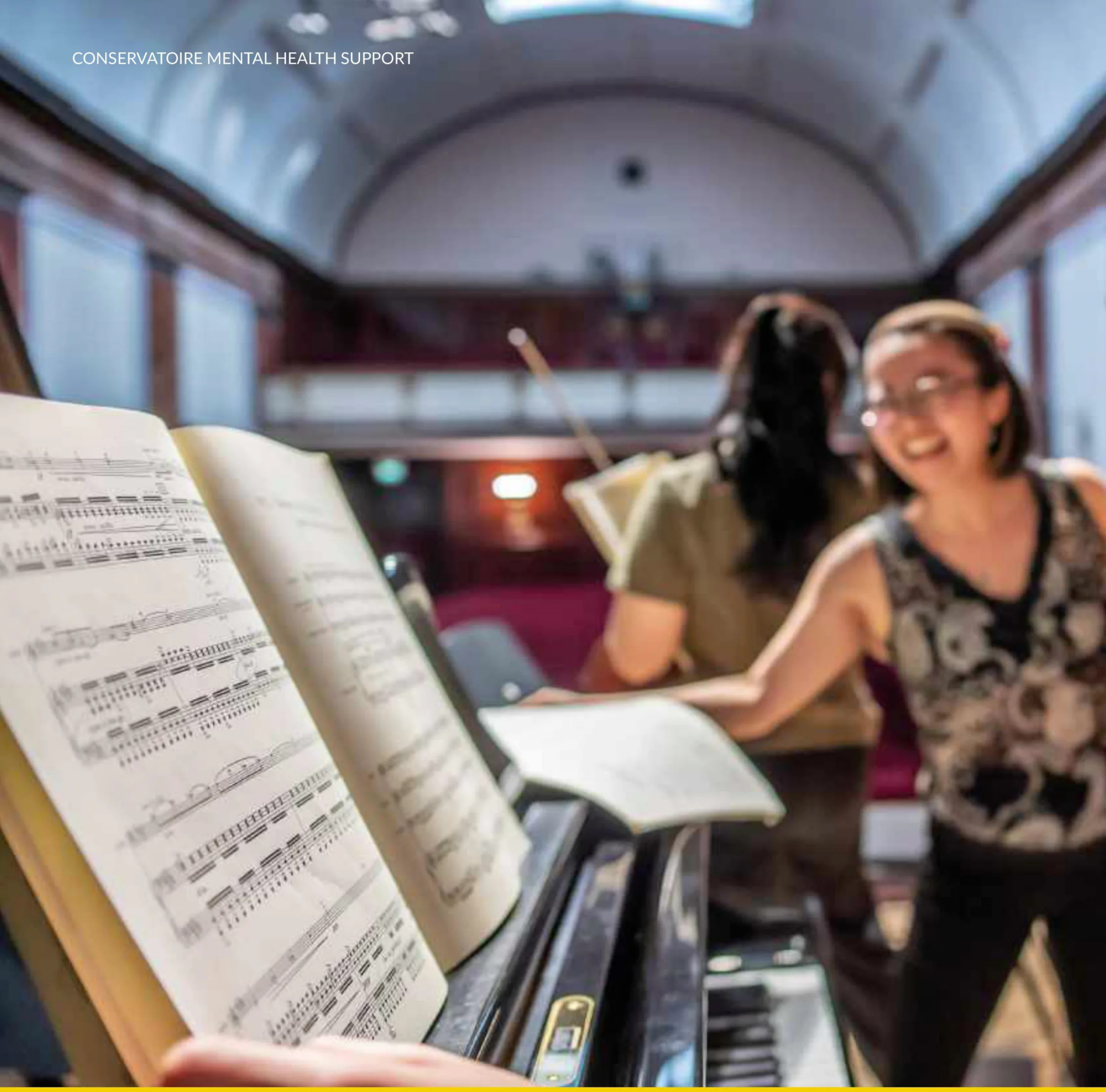
placement of the bridge (but still not carving one); and calculating tailpiece afterlength. Tailcord material begins to get tested for another layer of tonal education. This implies the occasional necessity to bush and re-drill buttons and pegs, and training follows suit.

When Worthy Apprentice is trusted to work alone, can interact with customers, prepare and pour casts alone, and can have work checked rather than critiqued, then they advance to **Fearless Apprentice**!

Then, when Fearless Apprentice can do a standard set-up below and above the bridge, can polish with alcohol, is ready to carve a bridge and complete a job from start to finish, then they graduate to Appointable Apprentice and we start all over again. This means building in another layer of understanding, which is deeper for each step in the journey. When Fearless Apprentice is ready to begin showing someone else what we have done up to this point, they can begin on bass-bars. In our shop we always follow the order of working operations, so try to instil that from the very start, based on the employee's own goals. This also teaches a respect for the process, and it can be scaled for multiple training settings. I hope we can agree there isn't just one right way to do anything; but there's always consistency! ●

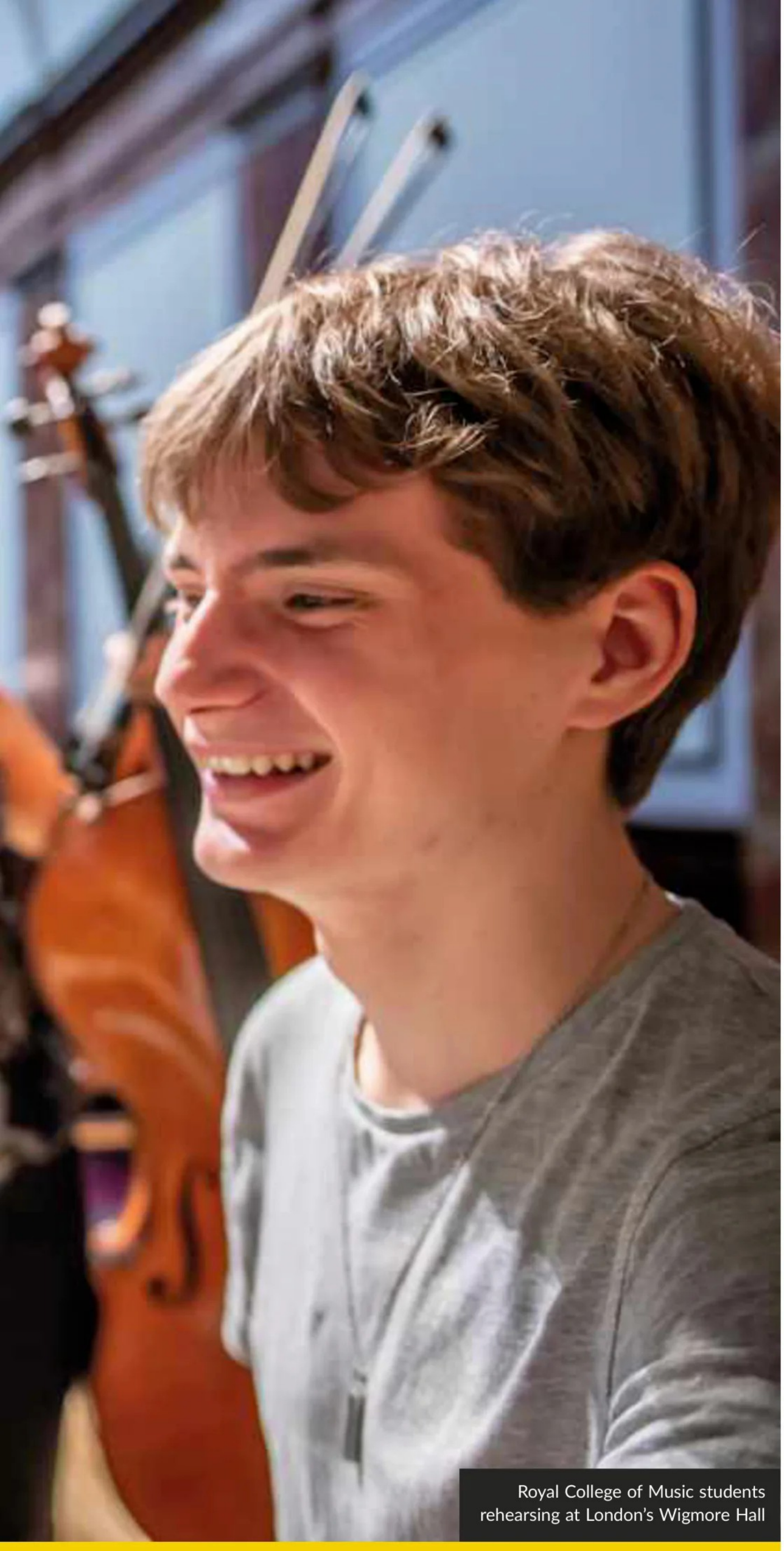
Thanks go to Warwick Schiller, John Safian, Kim Cafferty and all the others who are in my head, heart and eyes for their contributions to this scale over the years

ALL PHOTOS SARAH KLUGE



BRIGHT YOUNG

Good mental health is crucial to a young musician's development. **Rita Fernandes** hears from administrators, counsellors and teachers from leading music schools about what defines a successful conservatoire mental health support system



Royal College of Music students rehearsing at London's Wigmore Hall

MINDS

While undertaking research for this article I was hit with a caveat at every turn. 'You can't talk about mental health without talking about general health'; 'It's impossible to separate a young musician's mental health from their musical performances'; 'To understand a conservatoire's mental health service, you must understand the educational structure in which it exists.' What came from this endless zooming out was the realisation that when talking about mental health services in conservatoires, we are in fact talking about what responsibility institutions have in forming the best, and by extension healthiest, musicians possible.

From the bright-eyed fresher to the gigged-out fifth year, young musicians are at a vulnerable point in their lives when attending conservatoire. Establishing networks can be difficult and navigating new structures and cultures can trigger anxiety. These musicians can experience debilitating perfectionism and will have their mental resilience tested constantly. The latter is especially true since, owing to the rapidly changing music profession, students will most likely become freelance performers and be forced to handle uncertainty.

On top of that, the institutions at which these young people study are structured in a way that does not always make it easy to concentrate on self-care: friendships intersect with professional relationships, hierarchical structures can make it difficult to question authority, and heavy performance schedules can obscure the need for rest and recuperation. It is vital, therefore, that the institutions guiding these people through their developmental years are equipped with the resources to deal with the mental health struggles that may come with being not only a musician but also a human.

Although this article focuses mainly on mental health services within conservatoires, these are only one part of what makes an institution effective in supporting its students' well-being. I therefore use phrases such as 'mental health support' when referring to institutional support (whether through teachers or curricula), whereas mental health 'service(s)' refers specifically to the institution's counselling services.

According to administrators, counsellors and teachers from several leading music conservatoires, there is a general sense of optimism about the state of mental health support in their institutions. Services may not be perfect, but they are run and surrounded by people who genuinely care about offering effective help and are continually working to improve their services in a holistic way. ▷

PHIL ROWLEY

KENNY PHOTO RICHARD HAUGHTON. ACADEMY PHOTO ADAM SCOTT. COLLEGE PHOTO FRANCES MARSHALL

Within three years, the counselling service at London's Royal Academy of Music (RAM) has grown from a three- to an eleven-strong team. 'We have six part-time counsellors, three trainees and we took on some more staff to lift some of the administrative burden from the counsellors' shoulders so they could really focus on the students,' says Elizabeth Kenny, dean of students and a lutenist, teacher and Academy alumna. 'The service is almost unrecognisable from what we had when I was a student.'

Elizabeth Kenny

The free on-site service is based on short-term, solution-based therapy. After an initial assessment with the student, the team gets together to discuss who might be available to help them. Up to twelve sessions can be booked, and these are followed by a review. 'If they need longer-term help we'll either refer them externally or let them take a pause after which they're welcome to re-register,' says Kenny. 'The short-term aspect is an equity issue; it means we can give help to more students.' Demographic data and student feedback are used continually to improve the service.

Outside the Academy's service, work is done to demystify the topic of mental health. 'The head of the psychological support services, Anita Gould, talks to first and second years about it, so that they can see that there's a person on the other end,' says Kenny. Mental health-related materials have also been added to the Academy's website and intranet, and news on the topic is shared in newsletters. Staff members who are trained externally as Mental Health First Aiders also work closely with the counselling service.

Anita Gould

'In a busy institution with a lot of hourly paid teachers, communication is really important. It's a constant piece of work making sure that people are aware of the services available to students,' says Kenny. 'Then we can work on how to use this awareness in our educational model to harness effectively the amazing capacities of these young people.'

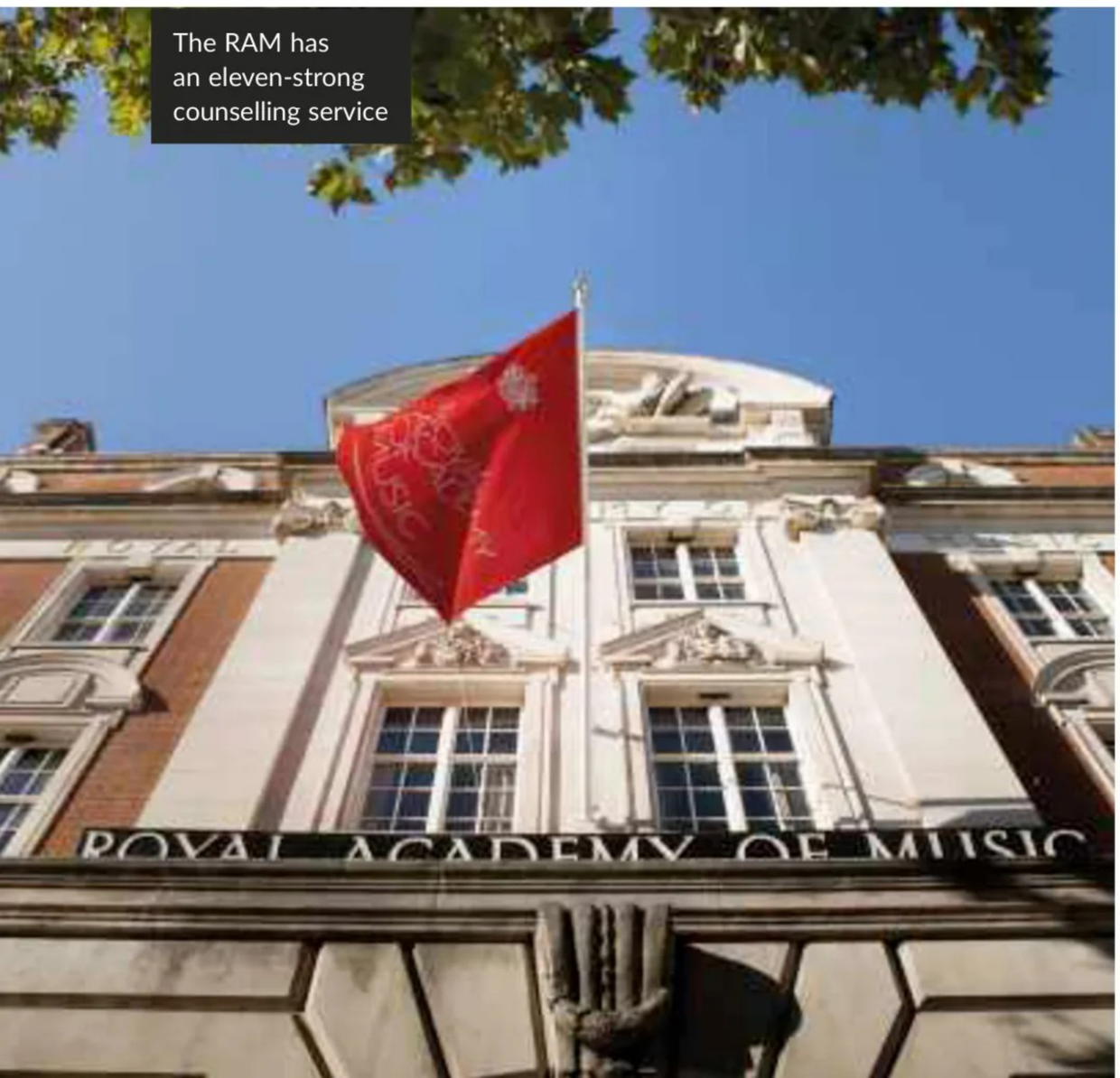
Venture west, and you arrive at another of London's esteemed conservatoires: the Royal College of Music (RCM). Its counselling team has been steadily growing since 2005, and they currently have three part-time therapists, alongside administrative staff. 'The mental health communications of our student services have increased immeasurably since 2005 to meet the needs of our students and the rise of social media,' says Nicola Smith, who manages the counselling service.

Nicola Smith

'Students can self-refer themselves to the service by completing an online form. They are invited for an initial assessment and then offered six counselling sessions, either online or in person at the college,' says Smith. Students can apply more than once, and the counsellors will signpost students to other services when appropriate. The service is free and on campus.

Since 2018, the RCM service has partnered with Togetherall, a 24/7 clinically managed online service where people can share their mental health struggles. Some staff are trained as Mental Health First Aiders and Smith has recently updated the RCM mental health policy to strengthen the service's ability to respond to and communicate about students of concern.

The RCM also has a unique connection to the Centre for Performance Science (CPS). Established in 2000 at the RCM, it concentrates on scientific research into performance generally. ▹



The RAM has an eleven-strong counselling service

Three part-time therapists are on hand at the RCM

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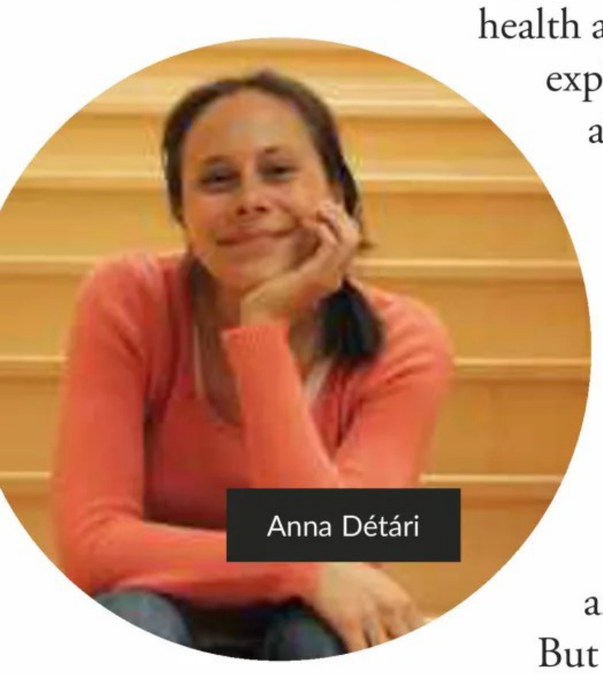
George Waddell, performance research and innovation fellow, is responsible for integrating the CPS's research into RCM undergraduate teaching. One example is the compulsory Healthy Musician module for first year BMus students, now taught by Anna Détári, a lecturer in performance science. Both Waddell and Détári have performance backgrounds – in piano and flute, respectively. The Healthy Musician module looks at why a student's health should be, as Waddell states, 'as core in their daily thoughts as learning repertoire'. Week three of the eight-week module is focused on mental health, using the PERMA model (see **figure 1**). 'We look at what day-to-day things you can do to boost your mental health and feel that sense of empowerment,' explains Waddell. Sessions on resilience are also included. 'We talk about coping strategies for when things get tough, when you didn't get that audition or gig, and how to maintain networks around you.'


Anna Détári

Some of CPS's experiments also involve musicians' mental health, such as the use of a performance simulator to recreate concert conditions and help manage performance anxiety. But Waddell and Détári stress the importance of treating mental health as part of health more generally. Waddell describes it like this: 'We tend to speak about physical and mental health separately, but they're linked; they're going to pull themselves down and lift each other up.'

Across the pond, we come to the Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA. Its counselling service is part of the school's Health and Wellness department – it's free and on campus. Director of counselling Allison Lara oversees a team of nine full-time, salaried therapists, including two multicultural specialists. Four of these have been added over the past two years. Lara and associate director Kathleen Irving also provide therapy sessions from time to time. 'The large team supports not only the students but also the staff. Counsellors don't burn out, are more resilient and are still excited about staying. When staff retention is good, students will continue to come,' says Lara.

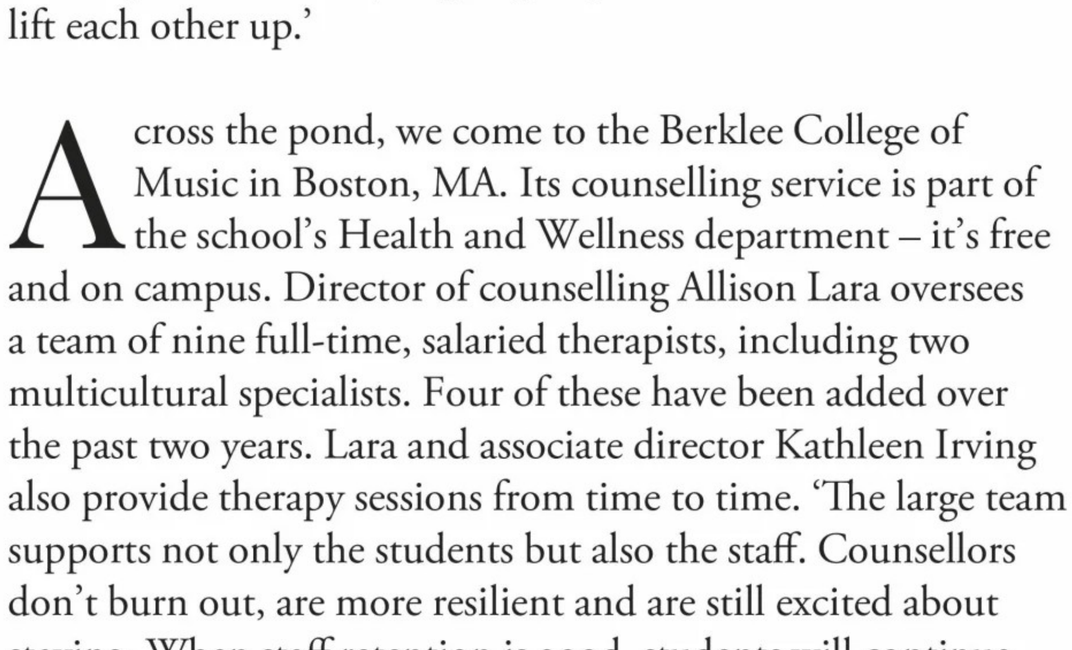
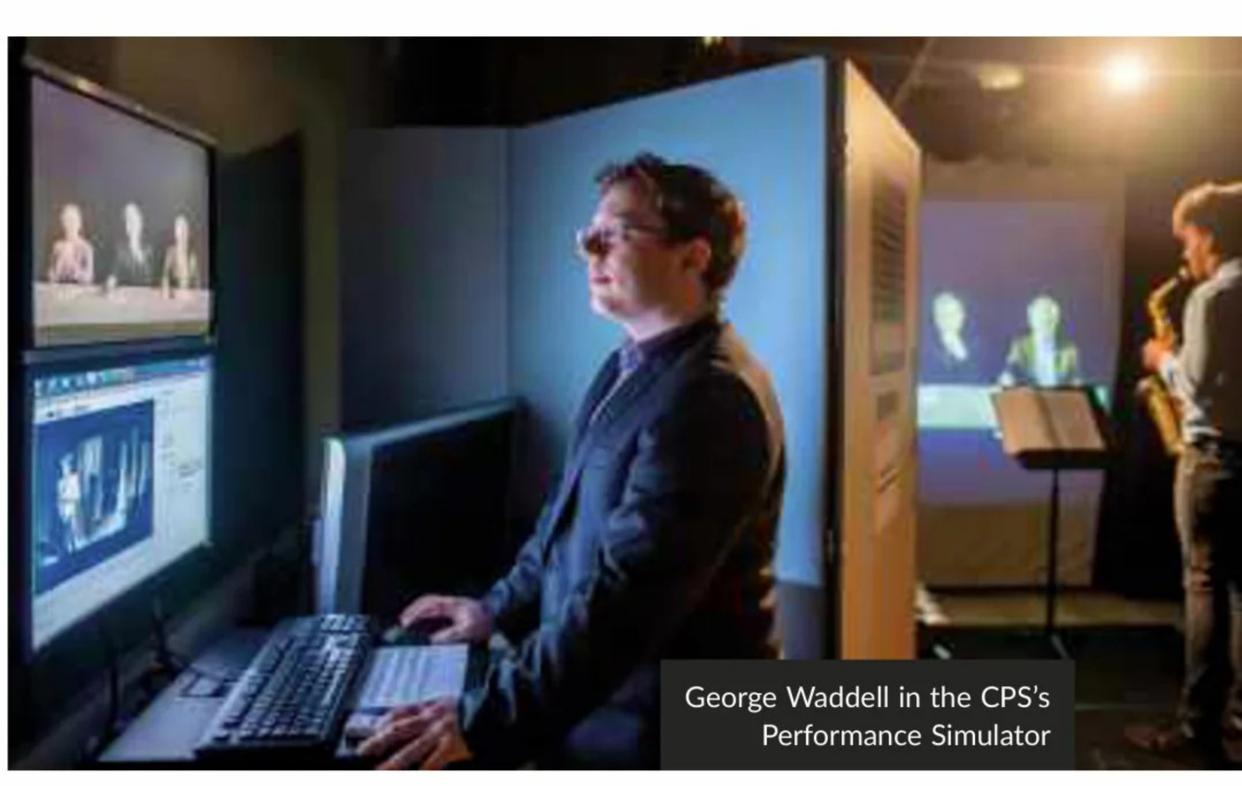


FIGURE 1 The PERMA model used to understand mental health

Students at the RCM café

Since January 2019, the service has worked on a 'flexible care model', based on an urgent care system. Before that, it functioned in a similar way to an outpatient therapy clinic: 'People who were coming at the beginning of the semester were more likely to get care, and by October there was a waiting list of two months,' says Lara. 'We had to rethink how we deliver care.' The current model offers either same-day appointments or those scheduled in seven days. 'It considers a student's lifestyle. If they have a change in their schedule and can come in, we want to give that support immediately. The model prioritises access.' Data from the end of every semester is used to help move the service forward. Recently this has seen the creation of several support groups. Outreach work includes setting up presentations in faculty meetings, often at the request of the faculty.

The school also recently started a collaboration with the Jed Foundation. 'The Foundation does an assessment to see the status of mental health education and prevention at your institution and helps you establish plans to fill in any gaps,' ▷


George Waddell in the CPS's Performance Simulator

STUDENTS PHOTO PHIL ROWLEY. WADDELL PHOTO COURTESY ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

says Lara. 'On a college campus, the counselling centre can be a very siloed place because we engage with students in a confidential way, so it's hard to be spokespeople. The partnership allows us to bring our knowledge to the students.'

Offering mental health support within an institution is not limited to providing a counselling service. 'You can have all the counsellors you want, but if you're getting a contradictory message from the most influential voices, it can undo a lot of the good,' says Waddell. 'Conservatoires have a unique structure where the teacher is basically your musical parent, a first aider – and so much more,' says Détári. 'Research has proven that the first person a student goes to in order to discuss their problems is their primary teacher.' Teachers are therefore central to whether an institution successfully supports its students' mental well-being.

David Wallace, head of strings at Berklee, says of his experience as a teacher and head of department: 'I'm approached by students who need help, as well as by faculty advocating on behalf of their students. Faculty sometimes accompany students to the Health and Wellness office to assist them with making an appointment.' With teachers most likely not trained clinically, a clear referral system is vital to ensure students are directed to the right place. 'Because Berklee has developed strong resources, a solid team and accessible information, referring students to mental health services is now a simple, friendly process. Making this support system a reality has taken time, effort and a strategic investment from our school, but it has paid off.'

David Wallace

Hsin-Yun Huang, who teaches the viola at the Juilliard School, New York, and at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, talks about the teacher's supportive role from a pedagogical standpoint: 'I see myself as working for the young musicians. How can I help that particular human being, with what I know about them, to survive in this particular structure? Students have come specifically seeking you out to be their teacher, so we're given that incredible privilege to be part of the student's life.' Huang likens the teacher role to that of a GP. 'You can't always say, "Go to the specialist." As teachers, we have to pool many different senses and say, "OK, that person could be in trouble." But if students feel like they can't talk to me, then they can seek help – because, after all, I'm not trained in that.'

Hsin-Yun Huang

The institutions themselves also have a critical role in the promotion of mental well-being, whether that's integrating the services' findings into their teaching, or making sure there is clear communication between every part of the organisation. Michael Durrant is the coordinator of the Healthy Conservatoires Network, which brings together a group of mainly UK-based conservatoires (including the RCM and RAM) to discuss health in the performing arts. The network runs two to three meetings a year focusing on different themes, including mental health. 'One of our challenges is how to understand change on an organisational level,' says Durrant. 'Some sectors understand this well, but for the large part of conservatoire history, the "master–apprentice model" hasn't been called into question.' In order to offer effective mental health support on an institutional level, it must be 'a central part of the cultural identity of the institution'.

'There's been a lot of conversation around how curricula need to change because they're so demanding,' says Berklee's Lara. 'And with the new generation of students getting more and more comfortable with talking about mental health, counselling services need to develop the necessary skills quickly.' For Kenny at the RAM, 'The gold standard is that the principles we learn from the mental health service then influence our teaching. It shows that the institution values it and is committed to encouraging good mental health. We're also looking at how we run our educational offering to make sure this aligns with promoting good mental health in an intensive performing environment. After Covid, all the conservatoires have been more eager to share if someone's doing something

The Berklee College of Music's Boston campus

'THE GOLD STANDARD IS THAT THE PRINCIPLES WE LEARN FROM THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE THEN INFLUENCE OUR TEACHING' – *ELIZABETH KENNY, ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC*

HUANG PHOTO RAYMOND HUANG. WALLACE PHOTO DAVE GREEN. BERKLEE PHOTO KELLY DAVIDSON

THE KEY TO OFFERING EFFECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IS BY MAKING SURE IT IS ENMESHED IN BROADER STRUCTURES

good, so we've also received good advice on building up our service, especially from the drama schools.'

The key to offering effective mental health support in conservatoires is making sure it is enmeshed in broader structures. Communication between people, departments and institutions, as well as visibility of and access to the service, are the main pillars that the above conservatoires have concentrated on to achieve this integration. Institutionally, that means reinforcing a unified message on every level of the organisation. Scientifically, it means seeing mental health as part of health more generally. And artistically, it's about understanding that mental well-being is intimately linked to being a good musician. 'Learning how to maintain and pursue health is as important as learning to develop instrumental technique,' says Wallace. In Huang's words: 'Music doesn't lie. When someone is healthy inside, it sounds that way.'

Pragmatically speaking, having services on campus and free to all students has huge benefits in terms of accessibility. 'Most external services are overwhelmed by high demand. We can provide immediate support to our students,' says Anita Gould, head of psychological support services at the Academy. 'We can support students more holistically,' says Smith from the RCM. 'If any issues relating to students are flagged up, counsellors are better placed to advise them on processes within our institution.' Lara sees the internal services as a 'good place to test the waters' before committing to outpatient therapy.

Ultimately, one could ask whether conservatoires should have a responsibility to provide mental health services. The answer is not necessarily. It may be preferable, but it's not what dictates whether an institution values the mental health of their students. 'You don't need to have a "centre for performance science" in your department. Making everyone have a shared vision is our goal. It's not just to play at our best possible level; it's to thrive in our health,' says Waddell.

If a school can achieve comprehensive support without the need for a counselling service, that's wonderful. It is unnecessary to make direct comparisons between different conservatoires' mental health services or be critical of schools if they don't have a service. Some schools may be in countries with effective-enough healthcare systems that referring students externally would result in better support. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the countries discussed here. And maybe a counselling service would be irrelevant in a country where seeking therapy is a cultural taboo, but where outreach projects are more effective. That is not to say that every conservatoire in the world provides adequate mental health support – from personal experience, I know this is not the case. But that is a subject for another article.

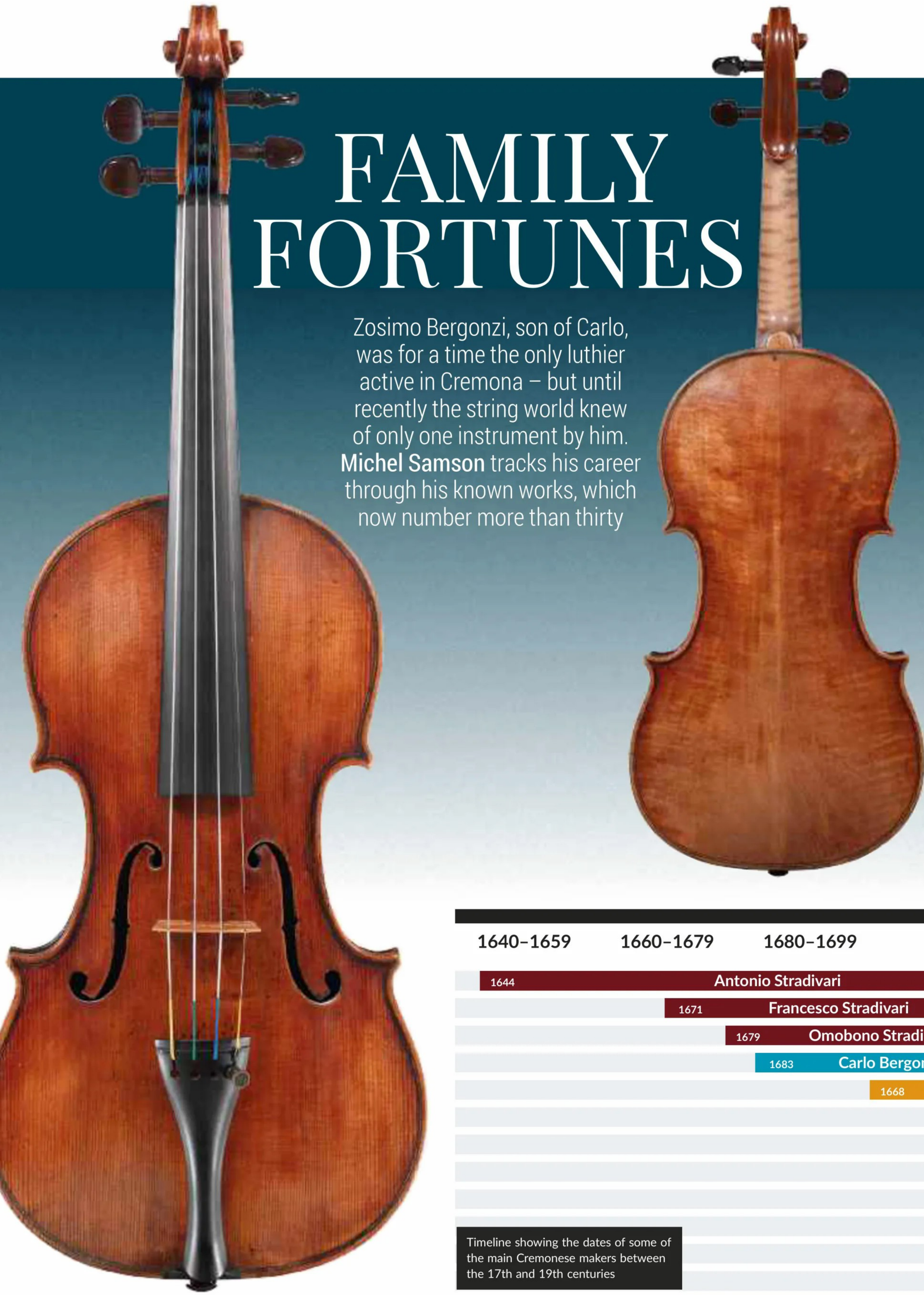
A better question would be: do conservatoires have a responsibility to offer the necessary education for a student to become the best musician they can be? In my opinion, the answer is a resounding yes. And caring about your students' mental well-being, in whatever way works best for your school, is a necessary part of this. It can come down to the smallest things: a teacher being aware that services exist, or an administrator putting a struggling student's needs before administrative inconvenience.

'Our goal is not to "fix" students. Instead, we hope to provide the resources and empowerment students need to improve their ability to manage their own mental health,' says Wallace. 'It's not so different from helping our students to become independent professional musicians. In fact, it's an integral part of that process.' ●

PHIL ROWLEY

FAMILY FORTUNES

Zosimo Bergonzi, son of Carlo, was for a time the only luthier active in Cremona – but until recently the string world knew of only one instrument by him. **Michel Samson** tracks his career through his known works, which now number more than thirty



Timeline showing the dates of some of the main Cremonese makers between the 17th and 19th centuries

There exists a 1746 census return of the Casa Stradivari, wherein Zosimo Bergonzi is mentioned after his father Carlo but before his older brother Michele Angelo. We will likely never know the reason why this census breaks the tradition of listing siblings by birth order but, since there are now more instruments ascribed to Zosimo than by his elder brother Michele Angelo, could it be that his placement in this census return is an indication of his importance in the shop?

Up to now, Zosimo Bergonzi's instruments have been often identified as 'school of' or 'circle of', but the key to solving the problem of his identification is in plain sight because, after the death of Michele Angelo in 1758 and through the early 1760s, there follows a period of almost ten years when Zosimo was the only violin maker in Cremona. The weight of carrying on this grand tradition rested solely on his shoulders.

Were it not for Dmitry Gindin's seminal 2001 book *The Late Cremonese Makers*, we would still be in the dark about Zosimo Bergonzi's output. In this volume, Gindin reserves a special chapter for Zosimo's life and work, even though his acknowledged output at that point only comprised a quarter-size violin and two violin moulds bearing his name. The quarter-size violin bears the original label dated 1775 and has been a great help in identifying other violins by Zosimo, as well as two violas and three cellos. The two violin moulds apparently share similarities with the Stradivari 'P' form in shape, type of wood, holes and block openings. According to Gindin, the first form shows signs of usage and has many wood fragments left in the corner recesses.

The aforementioned moulds, preserved in Cremona's Museo del Violino, are as important in the identification of Zosimo's instruments as the quarter-size child's violin that carries his label. In 1745, Zosimo's father Carlo joined the Stradivari workshop to assist in finishing the instruments remaining there after Stradivari's death in 1737. It is therefore not only natural that Zosimo's work shows clear links to that of his father, but also that his instruments show an affinity with those made in the Stradivari shop in the 1730s. Apart from those strong affinities, above all they show a clear resemblance to the aforementioned

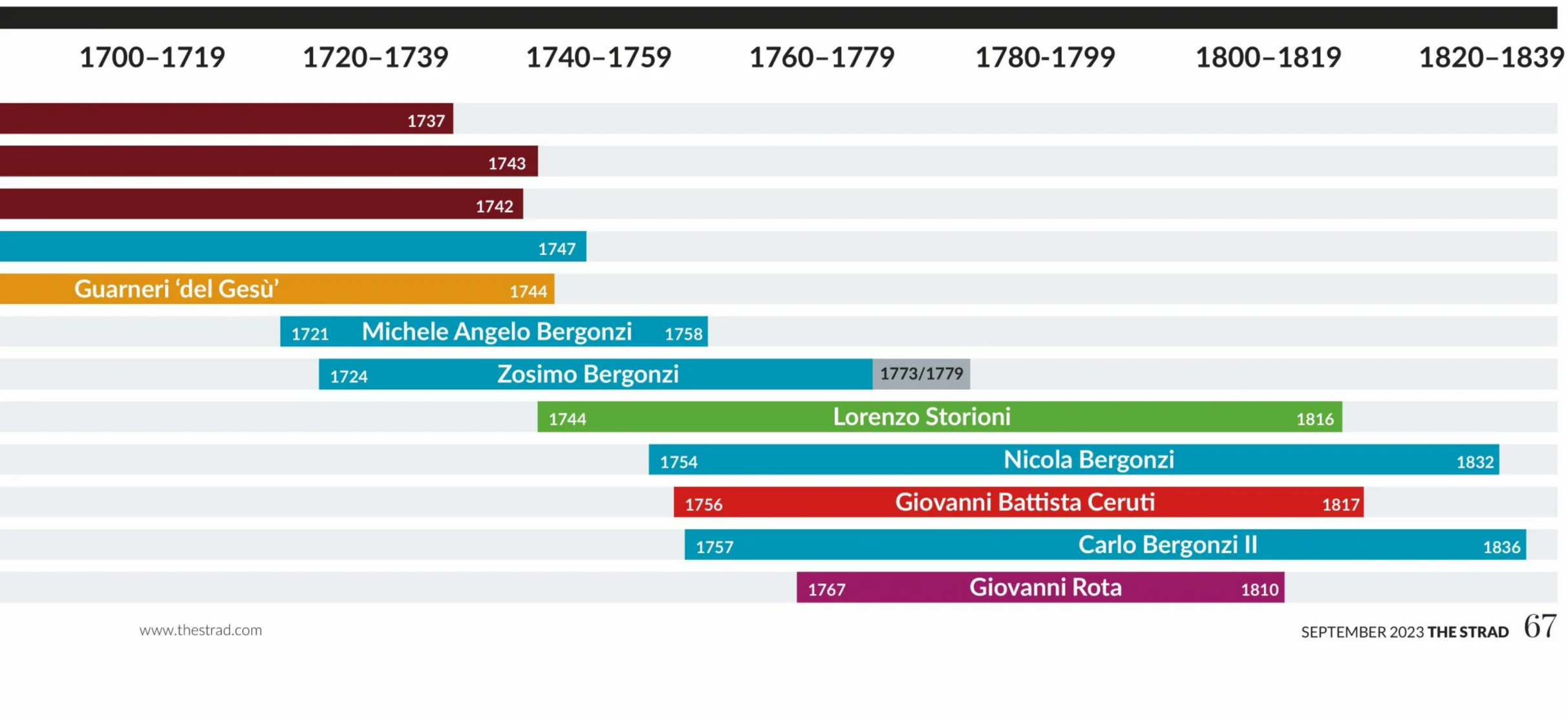
INSTRUMENT PHOTOS NATHAN TOLZMANN. TABLE ANGELA LYONS

Above Zosimo Bergonzi's name appears above that of his brother Michele Angelo in this census return from the Casa Stradivari
Left Front and back of a typical Zosimo Bergonzi violin

little violin. Notwithstanding the great merit of Gindin's book and the extensive research done by Duane Rosengard concerning the life of Carlo Bergonzi, we are still dealing with a period in Cremonese history that is filled with dark and unknown corners, particularly after the demise of Stradivari and Guarneri 'del Gesù'. Presumably, this is the reason the Hills wrote the following passage regarding the passing of the latter in their book *The Violin Makers of the Guarneri Family*:

> …with the master's death passed away, in reality, the greatness of the Cremonese school of violin making. The last of the Amati and the two sons of Stradivari were dead: True, Carlo Bergonzi was still living, he was an old man and died in February 1747 – but we see no signs of him at work, neither were his sons at all active. Yes, Cremona's golden era of instrument making had indeed passed away, the founding of which was the direct outcome of that wonderful environment which we associate with the Renaissance Period, a time of intense intellectual and artistic activity, which spread throughout the land.

Considering the lingering misinformation in this long-held Victorian view of Cremonese violin making, I hope with this ▹



Zosimo Bergonzi's signature appears on both of the violin moulds attributed to him

Above and below For a long time, the quarter-size violin shown here was the only known instrument made by Zosimo Bergonzi

article to promote our collective assimilation of more historically accurate findings.

We now know that violin making in Cremona did not come to a grinding halt. And I believe that we have found an answer to the question Gindin raises: 'Can this little violin then serve as a key to further knowledge of Zosimo Bergonzi the maker?' I, for one, believe we have found the identity of Zosimo Bergonzi.

The instruments we now identify as Zosimo's work all show such strong resemblance to one another that it is hard to ignore the personality they exude. This is especially evident in the scrolls, the shaping of the f-holes and, of course, their unmistakable outlines. I will be the first to admit, however, that the proof of Zosimo the violin maker is largely circumstantial. Then again, most violin expertise could be called 'circumstantial' because none of us were there when the instruments were created. But as everyone knows, circumstantial evidence can hold up in a courtroom and therefore I think it is applicable in the arena of violin expertise.

At this point I would like to reflect on the importance of the Rugeri family – a crucial element in the unfolding of Zosimo Bergonzi's story. It began with the noted violin maker Francesco Rugeri, who lived outside the walls of Cremona. He had four sons: Giovanni Battista, Giacinto, Vincenzo and Carlo, the youngest. Carlo was trained by his father and inherited his tools upon his father's death in 1698.

It was, however, Vincenzo who successfully continued the family tradition. By 1690 he had opened his own shop in the heart of Cremona. He attained significant financial success and the quality of his instruments is remarkable. With such a successful shop, one pertinent question arises: who assisted Vincenzo between 1690 and his death in 1719? Both his sons, Francesco (b.1704) and Carlo (b.1707), were too young to have been trained by their father. Thus, Vincenzo would have had ample economic incentive to recruit a suitable apprentice from outside the family. The hypothesis is that Carlo Bergonzi was probably the assistant so sorely needed in the Vincenzo Rugeri shop.

The development of violin making is seldom linear. Having carefully examined quite a few Zosimo Bergonzis, I have concluded that he both looked back at the great Cremonese tradition, and looked forward, imparting this sensibility to his sons, Nicola and Carlo II.

It was a Bergonzi family tradition to work for other shops. In days of yore, it was variously and wrongly assumed that Carlo learnt his craft in the Stradivari shop. This was unlikely because ▹

THE INSTRUMENTS WE NOW IDENTIFY AS ZOSIMO'S ALL SHOW STRONG RESEMBLANCE TO ONE ANOTHER

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A selection of Zosimo Bergonzi scrolls, including that of the quarter-size violin (*left*)

Zosimo's f-holes also show the same consistency in style

two of Stradivari's sons, Francesco and Omobono, were already working for him. Others have put forward the idea that Carlo was a journeyman in the shop of Giuseppe Guarneri 'filius Andreae'. This is also highly unlikely since the Guarneri family was facing dire financial difficulties at that time. So it makes sense to assume he was in fact an assistant in Vincenzo Rugeri's shop.

From 1715 onwards we can clearly see Carlo Bergonzi's hand in various productions of other Cremonese shops. They stand out because the outlines have a narrow waist, the f-holes are slanted and close to the edges, and the scrolls have narrow chamfers. These specific trademarks can be observed in the production of many shops. According to Julian Hersh's two-part article for Tarisio, 'Late Period Stradivari Cellos' in 2017, Carlo's hand is even evident in the production of Stradivari's cellos, namely the 'Pleeth' which carries an original label: *Sotto la Disciplina d'Antonio Stradivari*.

Returning to the masterpieces of the 1730s, we see not only a high level of craftsmanship but also very glamorous materials. Though we sometimes see instruments that have wings in the

CARLO BERGONZI AND HIS TWO SONS WERE BUSY JOURNEYMEN WORKING MOSTLY FOR OTHER SHOPS

back and even some filled wormholes, they are quite often finished with a luminous red varnish of beautiful composition and laid over a golden ground. Considering the excellent craftsmanship and yet the paucity of instruments, I think this is an indication that Carlo Bergonzi and his two sons were busy journeymen working mostly for other shops.

According to *A Cremonese Master Unveiled,* Christopher Reuning's catalogue of the 2010 Bergonzi exhibition in Cremona, there are ten Bergonzi labels generally agreed upon ▷

ALL PHOTOS NATHAN TOLZMANN

When viewed from the back, Zosimo Bergonzi's bass-side upper corners tend to point outwards

to be original. Two are believed to have been made in the 1720s and the remaining eight appear in instruments made after 1730. Relatively early, we can detect the hand of Michele Angelo – and I believe the hand of Zosimo as well – appearing in the works. Carlo Bergonzi's 'Spanish' cello is considered, according to Reuning, to have been made with the help of Michele Angelo. From here on, the violins illustrated in *A Cremonese Master Unveiled* show the participation of his sons. Here we have yet another indication they were journeymen, in this case working for their father.

If the paterfamilias Carlo Bergonzi established this journeyman tradition, it is not so far-fetched to assume that it must also have influenced his two sons and even his two grandsons, Nicola and Carlo II. This also explains why Zosimo remained such a mystery. Michele Angelo, the eldest son, inherited a degree of craftsmanship, but for one reason or another never reached the high level that his father Carlo had attained. In *The Late Cremonese Makers* there are five instruments pictured and Gindin rightly says these represent the core of Michele Angelo's production.

Somehow the instruments made by Zosimo Bergonzi emanate a certain strength, in both their appearance and their powerful tonal quality. Instead of slavishly adhering to Cremonese traditions, he somehow appropriates them. He lays claim in his own way to the culturally significant and repurposes them to his own ends.

In examining the works of Zosimo Bergonzi, the careful observer can note that, when viewed from the back, the outline of Zosimo's work is a mixture of his father's and late Stradivari. The right (bass) side shows a slight tendency to have a pinched waist with the upper corner pointing out. The left side (treble) upper corner points down.

The purfling is often not as evenly placed as one would find ideal. The 'black' and the 'white' strips of purfling are generally the same width and about 3mm from the margin. Where the purfling approaches the mitres, the 'white' becomes slightly wider. The mitres, in contrast to the violins of Michele Angelo, point quite far into the corners, leaving about 2mm of space between the points, straight into the centre of the corners. The edgework, especially in the corners and the C-bouts, is quite generous and rounded. The outer 'black' strip is raised in the purfling channel. In the examples where there are locating pins, they are away from the purfling. Lastly, Zosimo follows the

In contrast to Michele Angelo's violins, the mitres point quite far into the corners

Cremonese tradition of moving the purfling away from the margin just past the widest point of the C-bouts, allowing room to make a graceful bend into the mitres. This is also the place where one sees the 'white' strip widen.

The arching of the belly rises immediately behind the purfling channel and maintains its apex along the centre of the instrument, finishing on the other side by descending into the purfling channel, not unlike the archings in Stradivaris of the early 1730s. Even though the general layout of the instrument owes much to the influence of Stradivari, Zosimo's instruments never have the finish that one finds in those of his illustrious forebear. The arching height at the bridge is around 2cm.

The f-holes, on the other hand, show a faint indebtedness to Giuseppe Guarneri 'del Gesù' in their design. However, the placement and the cut of the nicks in the f-hole stems is quite different – almost identical to the way this was done by his father Carlo and his teacher, Vincenzo Rugeri. The relatively broad lower f-hole wings almost always have pronounced spurs. The lower finials turn back towards the f-hole stem exactly in the way one can observe in the child's violin that carries Zosimo's label.

Where one sees the most consistent evidence in Zosimo's work is in the scroll. The turns are quite low on the surface of the volute. The turn that enters the eye on the treble side is usually carved at almost six o'clock, whereas on the bass side it enters the eye slightly past that point. When viewed from the back, the treble eye appears closer to the main body than the bass side.

The fluting along the centre spine is wider on the treble side than the bass side. But when viewed from the front, the bass ▷

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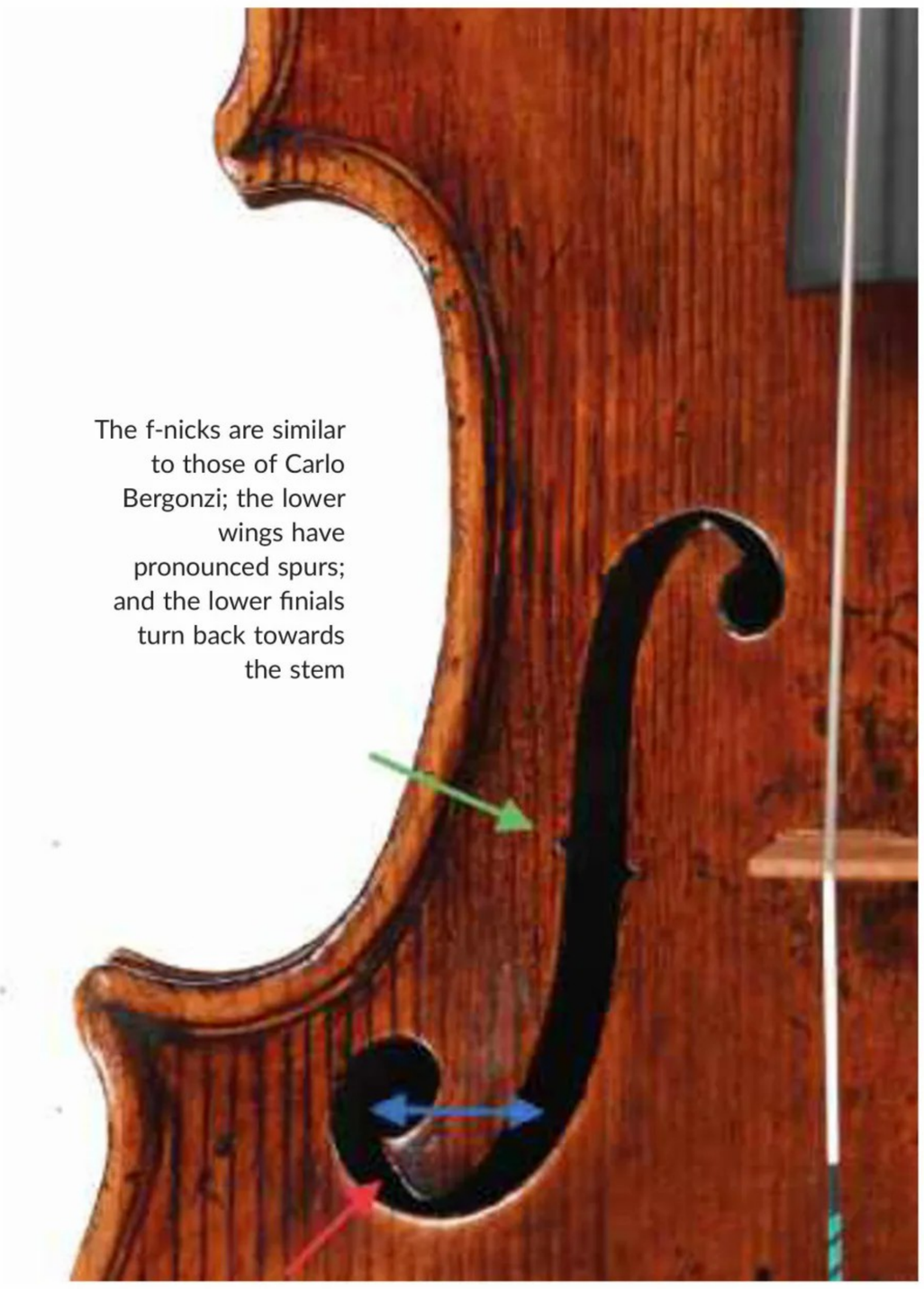

The f-nicks are similar to those of Carlo Bergonzi; the lower wings have pronounced spurs; and the lower finials turn back towards the stem

Zosimo tended to choose nicely flamed *oppio* for his backs

The turn that enters the eye on the treble side is usually carved at almost six o'clock. The lower part of the pegbox sticks out.

The centre spine ends at the base of the pegbox with two strokes that leave a triangular shape at the base

side is wider towards the chin. The centre spine ends at the base of the pegbox with two strokes that leave a triangular shape at the base. The bevel on the outer walls of the pegbox is wider on the right side than the left side.

The pegbox shape owes a lot to those made in the Stradivari shop in the 1730s. The side view of the pegbox has an especially graceful shape because the lower part of the pegbox sticks out further than one would normally see in most other makers. These characteristics are present on all the existing instruments by Zosimo.

The choice of wood is almost always a nicely flamed *oppio* (field maple) with sometimes strongly marked year rings. This is the kind of wood one would find in the Po Valley. The blocks and linings are made of willow. The interior work is, for the most part, cleaner than one would expect. Corner-blocks have cleanly cut mortises to let the linings in. Minimal tool marks are visible in the ribs. There are traces of knife and rasp marks to trim back the linings. (These observations comes from careful examination of one typical example.) As more examples are found, we may discover that on occasion Zosimo may have used different woods for the blocks and linings.

The varnish on his best instruments is, both in consistency and colour, of a deep red on a beautiful golden ground – almost, but never quite on the same level as his father's best varnishes. In any case, I have never seen a Zosimo with the pasty varnish to be observed on his brother Michele Angelo's violins. When Zosimo uses a golden yellow, it too is of high quality never seen on the Cremonese generation that follows Zosimo.

So many instruments have now been identified as Zosimo Bergonzi's handiwork that it is surely time to re-evaluate their place in the violin market, as it is clear that his instruments truly represent the compelling aspects of the great Cremonese violin making tradition. ●

The author wishes to thank Stefan and Julian Hersh, and James Warren for their help with this article

ALL PHOTOS NATHAN TOLZMANN

MARKING A MILESTONE

When Hilary Hahn decided to record Ysaÿe's Six Solo Violin Sonatas for their centenary year, all the stars seemed to align in terms of both timing and fresh musical insights, as she tells **Charlotte Gardner**

Joseph Szigeti, Jacques Thibaud, George Enescu, Fritz Kreisler, Mathieu Crickboom and Manuel Quiroga: six violinists who as individuals spanned the gamut of musical language – from Enescu's Romanian folk leanings and Quiroga's Galician inflections, to Thibaud's French sensuousness and sparkle – and who stand collectively as the dedicatees of Ysaÿe's Bach-inspired Six Solo Violin Sonatas op.27. In this set, dating roughly from July 1923, each sonata is lovingly fashioned to its dedicatee's personal vernacular, with their many in-jokes including (in no.2) Thibaud's 'obsession' with Bach's Solo Partita in E major. Essentially, there's enough 'golden age' violinist DNA buried in this score's pages to keep a musico-linguistic treasure hunter going for hours.

Not that Hilary Hahn – a direct descendant of Ysaÿe in violinistic terms, having been taught by his pupil Jascha Brodsky – had limitless hours when preparing her recording of it. In fact, it was pure serendipity that she was able to 'squeak it in', as she puts it, for the set's centenary year at all. The idea came to her in October 2022, when, while touring to Ysaÿe's former home capital of Brussels, she gratefully mused on her lineage, and then on the sonatas, which were already on her bucket list of recording projects. Musings turned into an online search for their composition date – 'We tend to think of them as relatively contemporary, but it suddenly occurred to me that they may be a little bit older' – and the discovery of their approaching milestone. Then came the rub, because a back-calculation revealed that any recording to coincide with the date would need to be in the can by Christmas. However, then came more serendipity, because not only did her touring schedule turn out to leave precisely the right number of pre-Christmas days to get the recording done, but also both her local Boston WGBH Studios and her usual co-producer, Antonio Oliart, were available.

'WHEN I LISTENED TO RECORDINGS OF YSAŸE, I REALISED THAT I'M MUCH CLOSER TO HIS WAY OF PLAYING THAN I EVER WAS BEFORE'

The next question was artistic feasibility. It had been over a decade since Hahn had last touched the pieces, but reading through the set she found that, whereas previously the sonatas had felt quite abstract to her, they were now coming naturally. This was partially down to experiences over the intervening years, such as having Spanish composer Antón García Abril write his Six Partitas for solo violin for her in 2014.

'He coached me closely on them,' she explains, 'and I don't think he realised, but he was also teaching me his roots.' Consequently, the play-through of Sonata no.6 ('à Manuel Quiroga') now saw her recognising Spanish musical references she hadn't understood before – and knowing what to do with them. So Hahn committed to the recording.

Much of the most valuable preparation happened in the studio, where she and Oliart began each session by listening to recordings of Ysaÿe and of the sonata of the day's dedicatee – or, if the violinist wasn't recorded, reading about them instead. 'We would just geek out a little,' says Hahn, 'talk about our impressions. Because with these sonatas, you can play them all in the same way, but they're actually written by a violinist for violinists he knew well. Ysaÿe really had the ability to customise them, and they do all feel different from each other. So even though when you're studying a piece and you might try to play it a certain way, it could sound artificial; here, part of the spirit of the piece is to understand the player to whom it was dedicated. When I was able to do that, certain things jumped out a bit more.'

PHOTOS CHRIS LEE

Hilary Hahn's Ysaÿe tribute was informed by the composer's playing

Most special of all, though, was what these listening sessions showed Hahn about herself. 'It's very difficult when you graduate to find your own identity, however prepared you think you are,' she reflects. 'Over the last decade, I feel I've got closer to bridging the gap between what I've been putting into my playing and what people have been taking out of it, and in that, I thought I was making my own path. But when I listened to recordings of Ysaÿe – which I didn't do until I was in the studio, because I don't spend much time on YouTube, where they are – I realised that I'm much closer to his way of playing than I ever was before. So in trying to find my voice, I've actually got closer to my roots.'

Pressed for an example, the first thing Hahn points to is rubato. 'To bring out the melody, I will sometimes start the run just a little bit later, play it faster, then fit the embellishment in – and I want to arrive on time at the top. When I listened to Ysaÿe play, I realised that's exactly how he did it too!' Another example is tone production: 'I've been developing different ways of fitting vibrato into my sound. It's hard to describe, and more a feeling, but I hear the range of the pitch within my instrument, then I try not to break the resonance with the vibrato; and he does a similar thing, fitting the vibrato into the resonance of his tone.' Hahn emphasises the word 'similar', because the sound is not identical – he's still audibly a different player in a different era. Her analogy is of seeing a picture of an ancestor when they were her age.

The excitement for the listener, meanwhile, is that the resulting readings sound both thoroughly Hahn and dramatically unlike any other solo Ysaÿe you're likely to have heard. I tell Hahn that in fact the sensation of the music's new-mintedness is so strong as to be almost a shock, albeit a good one. 'When a piece is old enough to have a life of its own, it's maybe time to cut an alternative path through the woods,' she responds, 'because the one path that is well trodden perhaps developed automatically, and actually there's another way that would serve equally well. I knew Ysaÿe was doing a lot with these sonatas. So it was a case of trying to unravel the riddles in them, then creating an interpretation with what was left, by means of clues and traditions, and often I found that the answer was in the score itself.'

As for what *is* in the score and how to read it, Hahn has been guided by her work with living composers, by Ysaÿe's own personality (anecdotally) and by how she has heard him play pieces she herself has played. 'My conclusion is that the score has cues,' she says. 'It's not super literal, and I can imagine that the composer would have wanted the performer to feel comfortable and make it their own. So that's the angle that I took.'

Of course, she could also bounce ideas off Oliart, who she says always has really good suggestions for alternative approaches, if ever something isn't coming across the way she thinks she's feeling it. As for the recording takes, after years co-producing and co-editing, for her it's about going for as long as possible, and using as much of it as possible so as not to change the feeling of an interpretation, or break the flow of the large arc.

Still, it was resonance, rather than the modus operandi, that was most filling Hahn's head during recording sessions – and quite literally: in one especially evocative sentence in her sleeve note essay, she describes how she would emerge into the winter air afterwards in a haze, hypnotised, her brain 're-harmonised by the tonalities that had vibrated through my jawbone'. She evokes that line as we wrap up our conversation, elaborating that the jawbone sensation came about because these pieces are written so that if you play into them in a certain way they fit the resonance of the instrument. It's the very quality she mentioned earlier about Ysaÿe's – and now her own – playing in general. In other words, the extra DNA buried in these pieces is Ysaÿe's own. She concludes, 'I was trying to summon that sort of cyclical energy, while having as much freedom as possible, while having the dramatic dimension, and the references specific to each player and style.' Hence how a recording that took just nine weeks from first idea to final note can sound so excitingly new, and glowingly natural.

WORKS **Ysaÿe Six Solo Violin Sonatas op.27**
ARTIST **Hilary Hahn (violin)**
RECORDING VENUE **WGBH Studios, Boston, MA**
RECORDING DATES **November–December 2022**
CATALOGUE NUMBER
Deutsche Grammophon DG 486 417-6
RELEASE DATE **out now**

FIGURE 1 Knocking on an open edge

WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Finding why an instrument buzzes while playing is a task that bedevils luthiers. **Dmitry Tarakanov** presents a checklist for the most likely causes

Sometimes, looking for the part of an instrument that's causing it to buzz is a task that can flummox even the most experienced luthier. The rattle resonates all over its body and we can hardly rely on our ears as we search for the place to blame.

Often our eyes are no more helpful than our ears for this task, as the area that is buzzing might not be easily seen. All we can do is to check the instrument, part by part, to find the reason for the unwanted sounds.

Over the past couple of years I've been inspired to combine all of the reasons for an instrument buzz into one checklist, with short instructions (where needed) on how to solve each particular problem. I have found it a useful guide in the dark, tangled forest of unwanted sounds. Here is the full list in its entirety. I've organised the reasons from the most to the least common, in my experience. It should be noted that this list is intended for fellow luthiers; nearly all these repairs should only be attempted by professionals, especially where glue is concerned.

Unglued places around the edge. These could be open seams or unglued corners. To look for those, you can hold your instrument by the neck and gently knock the body all around the edge with a knuckle (**figure 1**). The sound of an open seam will be fairly obvious; you'll get a feeling that something is loose there. Often the open seams are visible to the naked eye. Make sure to check the place that is clamped by a chinrest. To find an unglued corner, you can slightly push the corners one by one out of the block. All loose and open spots should be glued.

Fingerboard bumps. A buzz can be caused by a fingerboard that doesn't have an even scoop all along its length. If you don't have a straightedge to hand, you can push down the strings, one by one, to the fingerboard with your left index finger just next to the nut, and your right index finger on the end of the fingerboard. Then look against the light or a white surface. You can easily see the scoop relative to a string this way (**figure 2**). If there are any irregularities, the fingerboard should be planed.

Any stickers on the fingerboard also can cause the string to buzz against them. Avoid stickers if possible.

Fingerboard wear from playing. Point the scroll end of the fingerboard straight to the light and look along the fingerboard. Under this hard backlight, you will easily see all pits and ditches that have developed from the pressure of strings and fingers (**figure 3**). If you can see any of these on the fingerboard, it should be planed. As well as causing a buzz, they can alter the intonation.

Grooves in the bridge. Strings shouldn't lie too deep in the grooves. A depth of roughly one-third of the string diameter is a good one to aim for (**figure 4**). If you have one string buzzing but the buzz disappears if you push it slightly with your finger on the bridge (to force it to vibrate up to your finger), then it's likely there's a problem in the groove of that particular string on the bridge. Fix the extra depth problem, or if the depth is correct, make the groove smoother with a needle file.

Grooves in the nut. Push the string straight after the nut, and make it vibrate with a bow. If the buzz disappears there's a good chance that the problem is in the groove of the nut. If it's too deep (again, more than a third of the string diameter) or has some high, edgy spots (the string doesn't flow nicely into the pegbox), it can cause a buzz. Remove the extra material if the grooves are too deep.

To find the high spots you need to remove the string and look attentively at the groove. If you can clearly see a shiny burnished place and it's far from the nut's edge, attack it with a needle file. It's a high spot that raises your string above the groove and allows the rest of the string to rumble against the walls of the groove, instead of lying there with a good contact. **Figure 5** shows a nut with a good shape and depth of grooves.

Very low nut, so the string can buzz against the fingerboard (**figure 6**). The easy way to fix this is to add a piece of black veneer under the nut. Adjust the grooves and reshape the nut if needed. ▹

ALL PHOTOS DMITRY TARAKANOV

FIGURE 2 The ruler rests on a bump

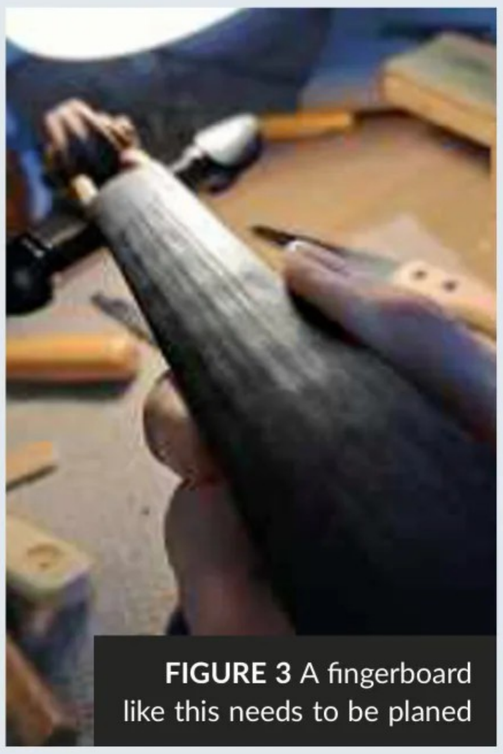

FIGURE 3 A fingerboard like this needs to be planed

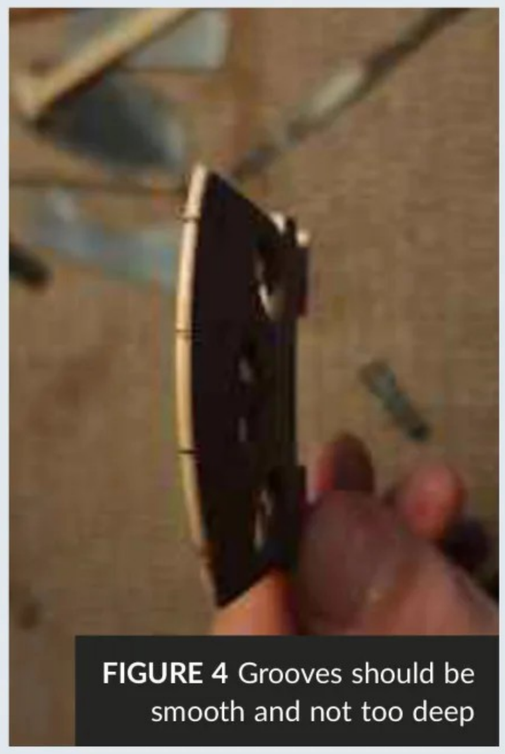

FIGURE 4 Grooves should be smooth and not too deep

FIGURE 5 A nut with a good shape and groove depth

FIGURE 6 Low G string with noticeable kinks in the groove

FIGURE 7 The fine tuner is dangerously close to the top

FIGURE 8 Decorative parts of pegs can cause problems

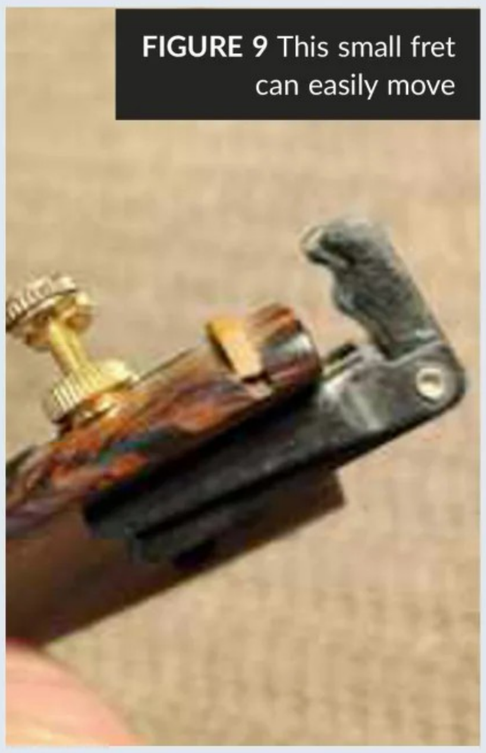

FIGURE 9 This small fret can easily move

FIGURE 10 The tailgut's free ends are too long

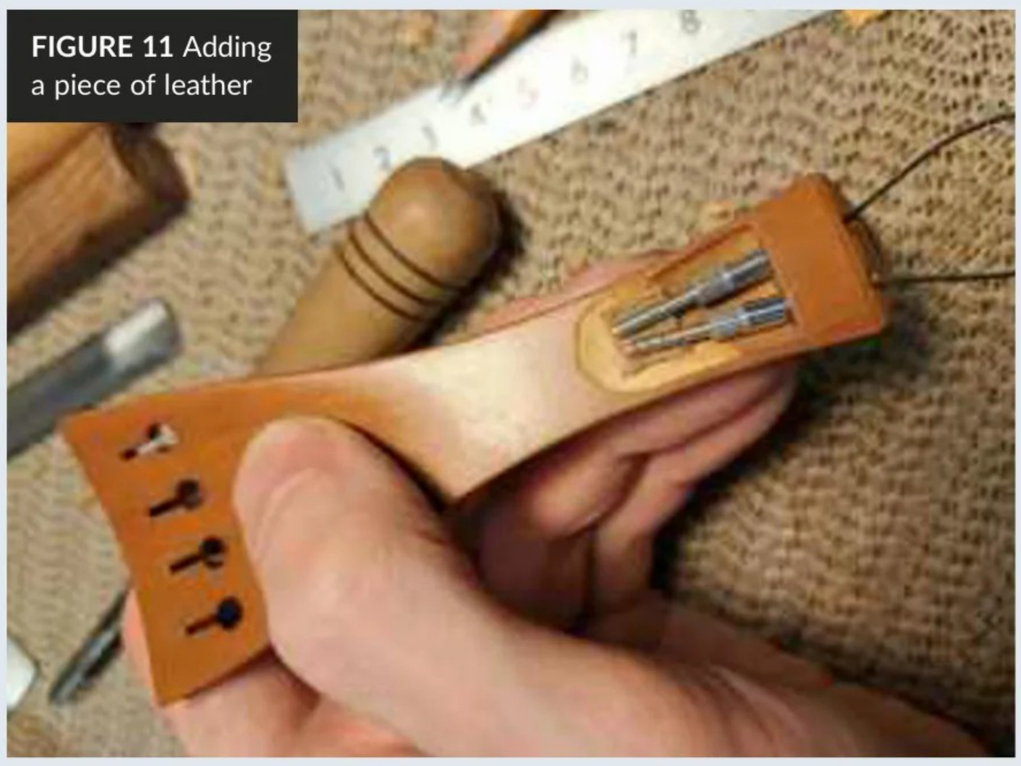

FIGURE 11 Adding a piece of leather

The bridge is too low. Even if your fingerboard has a perfect shape, the strings can buzz because they are too low. This will create a buzz mostly in the low positions while playing forte. There's a good chance that this bridge should be changed.

Fine tuners. Make sure that the fine tuner doesn't touch the top plate (**figure 7**). A loose screw and nut will also cause a buzz. Sometimes the nut just keeps loosening because of the vibration. A small amount of thread locker or super glue (*very* small, like a needle tip) will help.

Moving parts of pegs. These can be tips, rings or other decorative pieces (**figure 8**). They can just be glued in place with super glue.

Old or damaged strings. A string's ability to create harmonic movement depends on its evenness along its whole vibrating length. If the string is old the wiring can become detached from the core, but even if it is new, the wiring can easily be damaged by negligent handling – or a poorly shaped nut and bridge. Both of those cases can cause buzzing from the string.

Small fret on the tailpiece. This is actually a separate piece of wood, plastic or bone, and on commercial tailpieces it can often be badly glued (**figure 9**). Sometimes you can see a clear gap between the fret and the bottom of its groove. It can definitely move and cause a buzz. You should remove the tailpiece from the instrument and glue the fret well.

Parchment touching the string or the bridge protector that's on it. Glue the parchment back on the bridge using PVA or super glue. Remove the bridge protector or move it to the part of the string with silking on the peg or tailpiece end, making sure that it sits there firmly.

Cello endpin. The free end that's inside the instrument might be too long; there could be a loose screw; or any of the endpin's moving parts might come loose. It's easy to diagnose that problem: ask a friend or colleague to hold a hand around the plug while you play the cello. If the buzz goes away, look for the moving parts in the endpin and fix them.

Tailgut. Free ends (**figure 10**) or metal parts rattling against the top plate of the tailpiece can cause a buzz. Cutting the free ends and adding a piece of thick leather between the metal parts and the tailpiece (**figure 11**) usually helps.

Tailpiece touching the body or chinrest. You could find another model that doesn't touch, or you could carve a piece off the existing tailpiece (if it touches the plate). You can also take a piece off the chinrest, or possibly move it away slightly. ▹

IF THE STRING IS OLD THE WIRING CAN BECOME DETACHED FROM THE CORE

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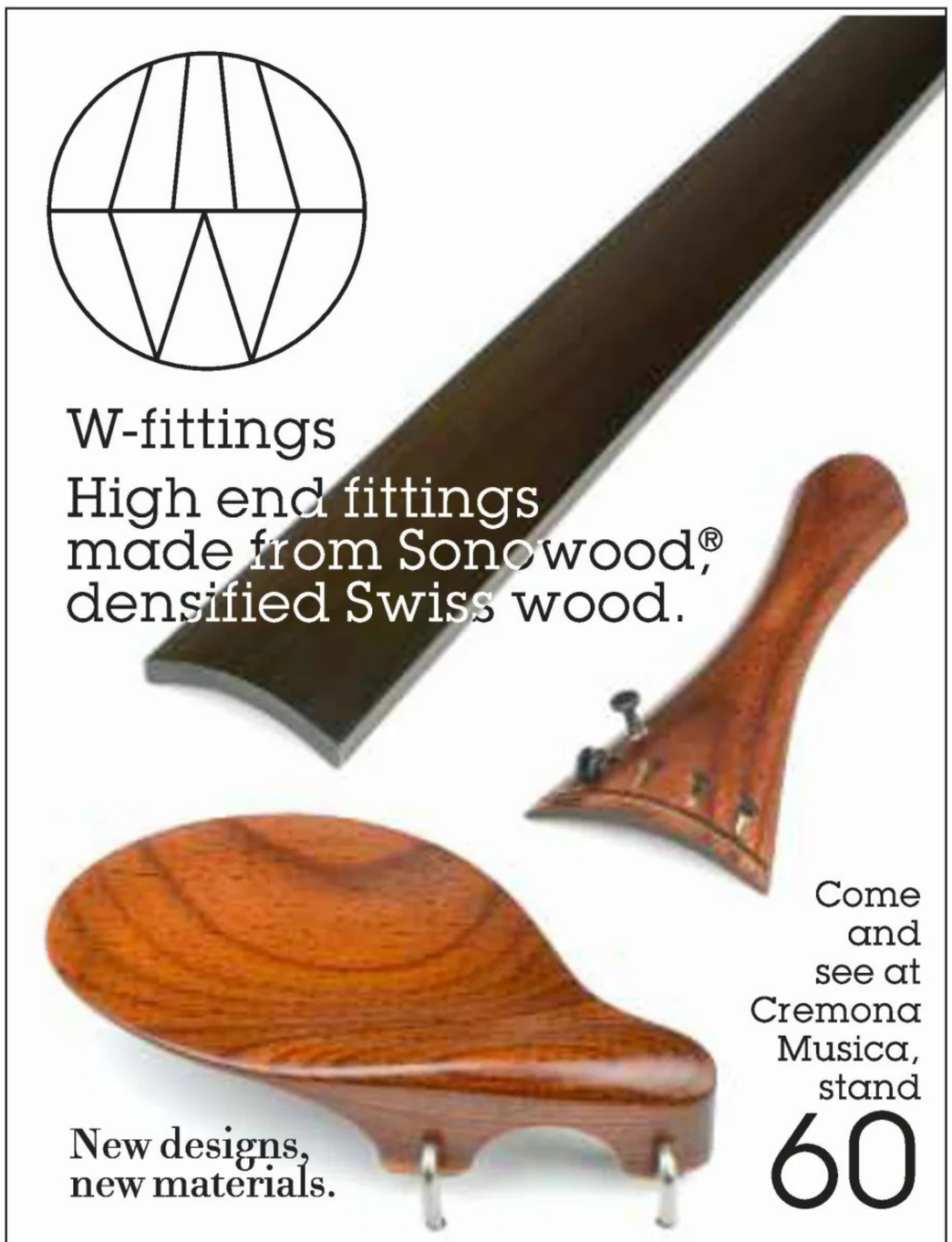

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Unglued fingerboard. Gently try to push the end of the fingerboard upwards, away from the body. If you see a gap between it and the neck, this will definitely cause a problem (**figure 12**). It needs to be glued in place.

Fluff or dirt in the f-holes. Have a look at the points where the upper and lower f-hole wings are almost touching the rest of the plate. There should be a noticeable gap to allow the wing to vibrate freely. If you notice that some sludge has built up there, clean it out with a small piece of fine sandpaper, or just a piece of cardboard. In a really bad case you might need a knife to cut through it!

Purfling. Loose purfling is the sneakiest and most hard-to-find cause of a buzz. It can be a piece of purfling that's become unglued from the sides of the channel. Or it could be a small wood shaving or a piece of glue rattling in the space between the purfling and the bottom of the channel.

In the first case, rubbing in some hot liquid glue can help. In the second, you need to get access to the inside of the purfling channel. To do that, you can carefully separate a piece of purfling from the side of the channel with a small, sharp spatula (**figure 13a**). Then you can squeeze in the glue with a prepared syringe. I learnt the trick of creating a prepared syringe in Peter Prier's workshop, where it was called a 'plunger'. The trick is to glue the seal part of one syringe to the end of another (**figure 13b**). This creates a tool that allows you to put the glue inside a tiny crack or space under pressure.

Trash inside the violin. A rattling wood shaving or a piece of glue can dangle inside causing trouble. Remove it via the f-hole. An air compressor could be helpful if you have one around.

Chinrest touching the top plate (**figure 14**). Obviously you can change the model, but alternatively you can add some extra material (leather or cork) under the contact spots (not the unwanted spot) to lift it up higher relative to the plate. Don't forget to put some chalk on your leather or cork so it won't stick to the varnish.

Strings crossing in the pegbox or free ends of strings. Simply put, they should never be touching each other at all. The extra piece at the end can be easily cut away.

If you've gone through all of the above-mentioned variants and haven't found a cause of the buzz, it is probably something inside. But even then, you might be able to rectify it without opening the instrument. If it's just a loose cleat or a piece of lining, it might be an option to use a syringe with a tube attached to it, or a curved brush to apply the glue to distant inner spots, and then use magnets if you need to put some pressure on those places.

So, although looking for a buzz can be really challenging, I hope this list can at least make the process more organised. And of course there's one other place a buzz can reside… in the player's imagination! ●

FIGURE 12 This fingerboard has come unglued

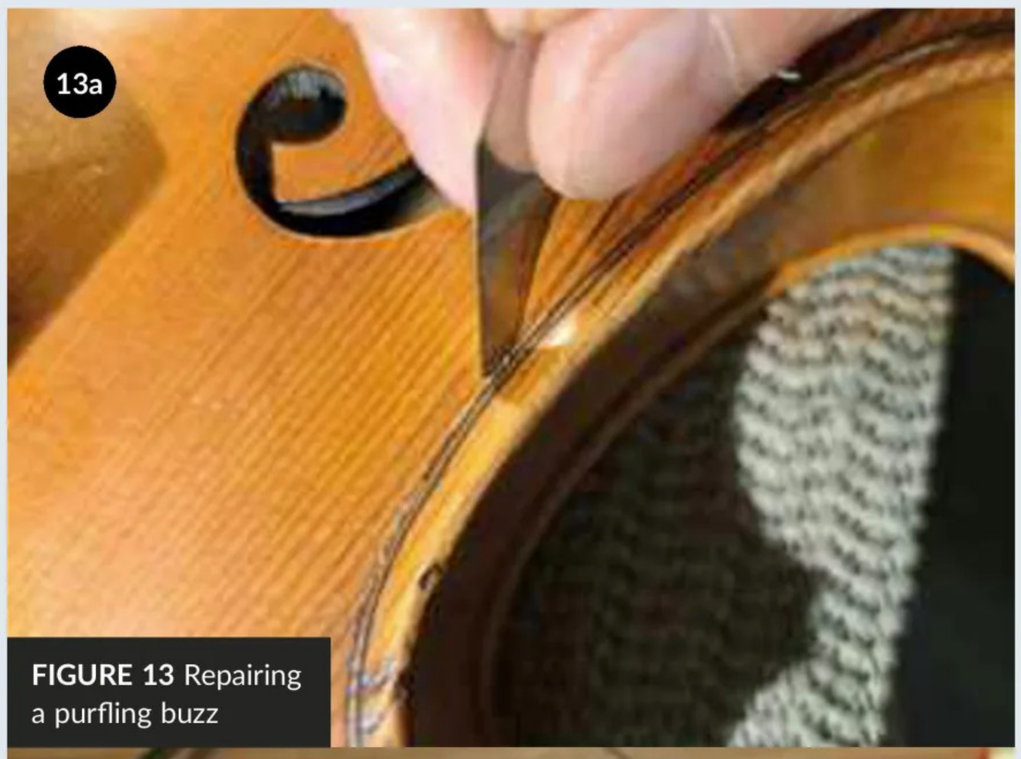

FIGURE 13 Repairing a purfling buzz

FIGURE 14 Chinrest touching the top plate

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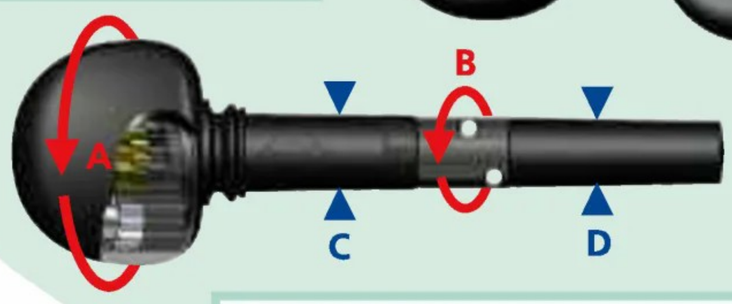

Non Moving Parts: The smooth parts of the shaft **C** and **D** are set firmly into the pegbox. They don't rotate when tuning the string.

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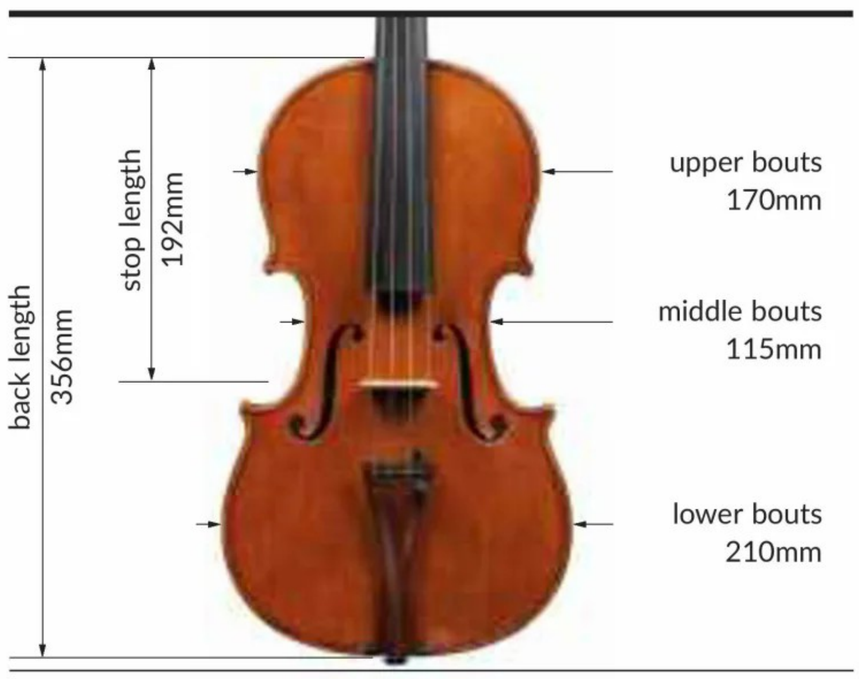
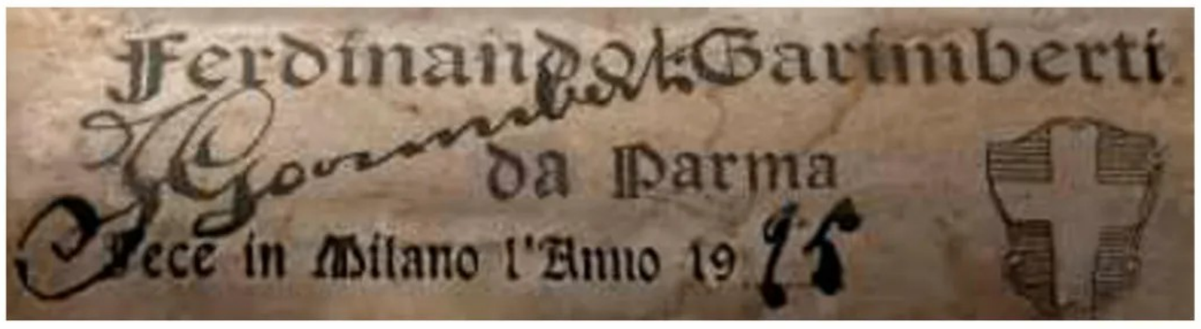


All measurements taken with a tape measure



Making an ebony crown

An intricate method for a sometimes vital part of the repair process

BY GEORGI NIKOLOV
Luthier based in Cremona, Italy

Stringed instruments from the violin family can be preserved for centuries when stored and used properly by museums, collectors, owners and musicians. However, over the years various factors can cause deformations, necessitating their restoration and alteration to prolong their life.

One violin part that can be subject to wear and tear is the back button. This is the small part of the back to which the heel of the neck is glued, and which helps maintain the neck fitting position. It is rare to find well-preserved buttons on instruments from the era of the first Italian masters. Many of them are worn out, rounded off or too short, and some need an ebony crown installed. Sometimes it is necessary to replace the neck with a new one, because its length needs to be adjusted or because of excessive wear, deformation or breakage. In some of these cases, the original back button is small or short, which affects the strength and shape of the neck.

To make a button of the right size and shape, we need to fit an ebony crown. The black ebony colour creates a sharp contrast with that of the back, which contributes to the aesthetic appearance of the instrument and improves the strength of the button. These are the reasons why I use ebony crowns when I make my antiqued instruments, or when making copies. They bring the newly made instrument closer to the original model.

Drawing of the back button

1 In this specific case, I am working on an instrument inspired by the iconic 1742 'Lord Wilton' violin by Guarneri 'del Gesù'. I install an ebony crown after the final completion of the heel on the neck.

Using the same template, I outline the contour of the back and button (1a). I take the centre of the back as a starting point, which coincides with the centre of the button during fitting.

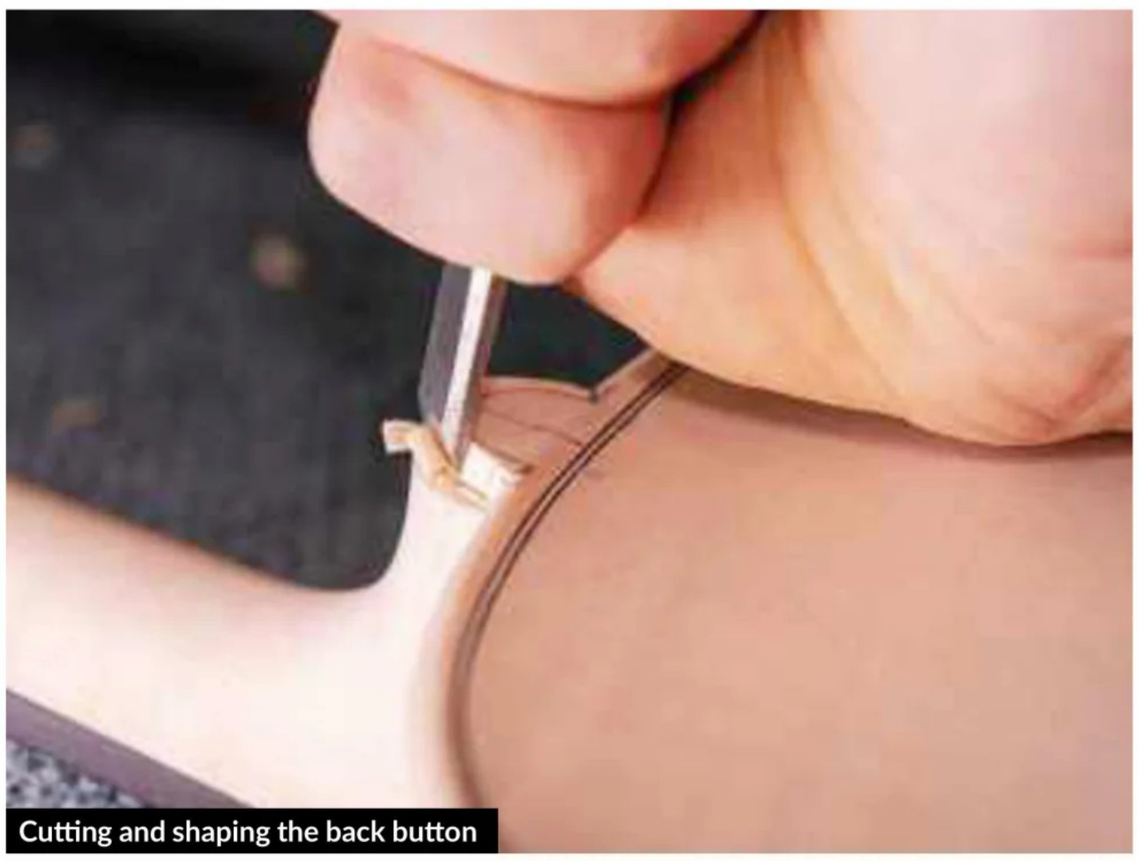
After that, I draw a semicircle with the help of a compass (1b). The distance from this semicircle to the edge of the button is 3mm on the right and left, and 4mm at the top. This way, I get the thickness of the crown, while the internal semicircle remains for the violin button.

ALL PHOTOS BOGDAN BRATOEV

Preparation of the ebony workpiece

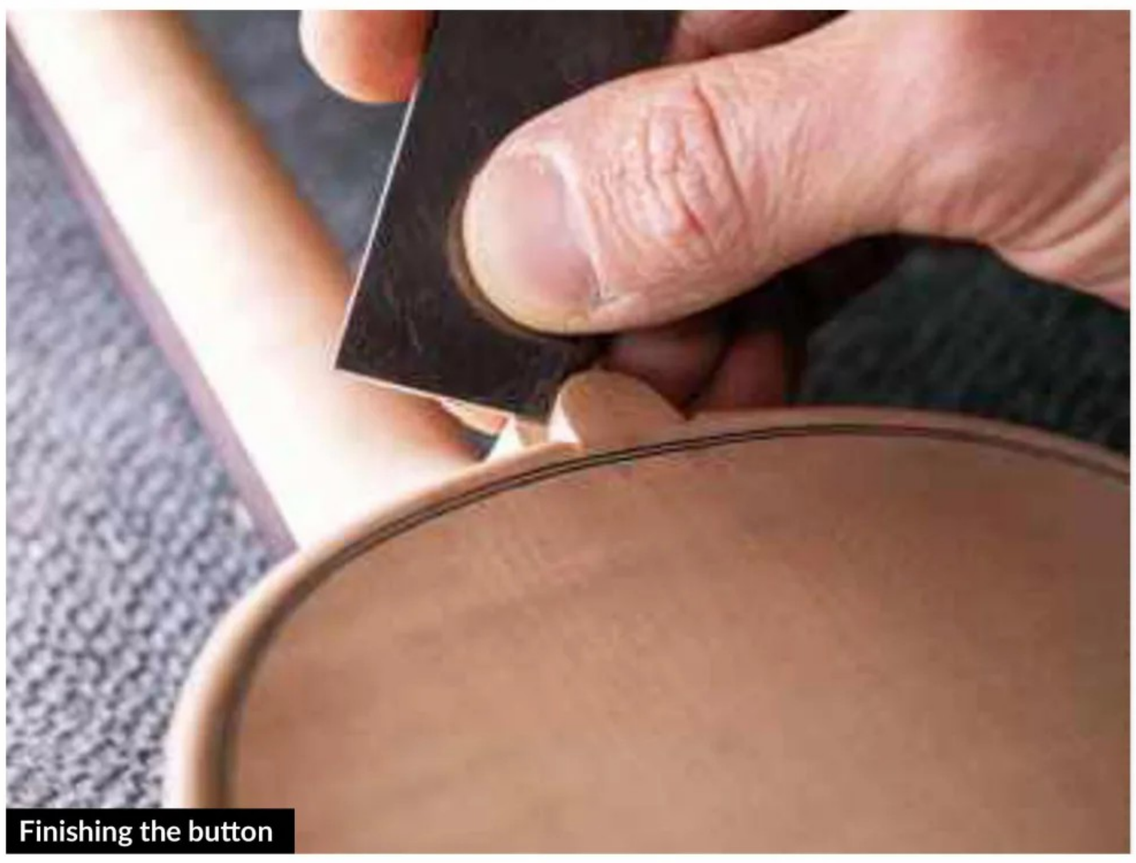
2 I have selected in advance the ebony blank to make the crown. The preparation consists of planing a small piece of ebony (2a) with a radial section and thickness 1mm greater than that of the back button (5mm). Before I outline the crown, the dimensions of the workpiece are larger than those of the finished button, in this case 20mm (height), 26mm (width) and 6mm (thickness).

I use the same template from step 1, with which I outlined the button of the violin (2b). I repeat the outlining on the ebony detail. Using a file, I make the upper part of the crown oval and thus get closer to the size of the button. Then I find a conditional centre on the ebony detail, and draw a semicircle using a compass. It has the same radius as the semicircle I used when outlining the back button in Step 1b. I add two angled notches in the direction of the fluting channel (2c).



Cutting and shaping the back button

3 I start by cutting the back button in transverse direction with a knife, trying not to touch the heel of the neck. This will prevent damage during subsequent processing and treatment, and will create an even base when gluing. Thus the finished ebony crown will rest on the heel of the neck, fitting perfectly to it, and will look as if it is part of the back edge. I create a semicircle using a chisel and a gouge with the right curve and shape.



Finishing the button

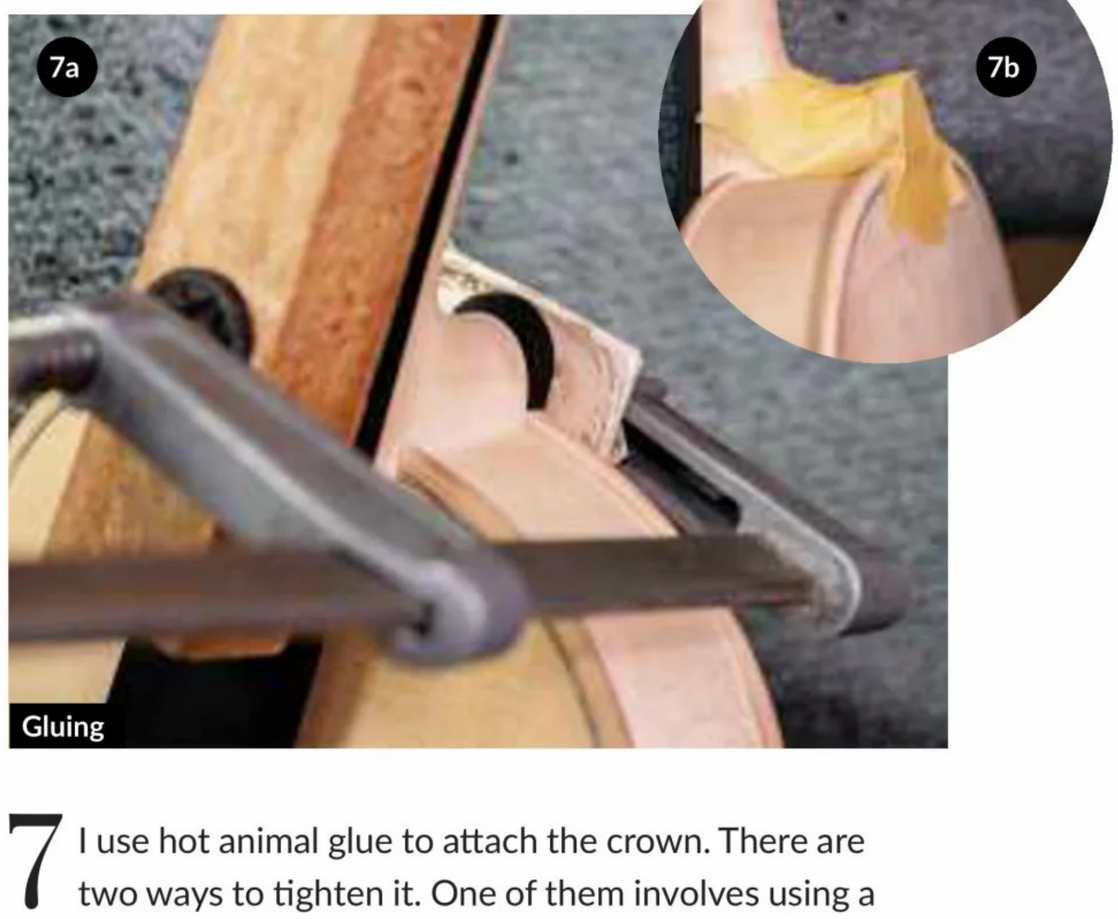
4 Using a scraper, I finish the place where the crown will be installed, making sure that the resulting surfaces and walls are even. I need to achieve an angle of 90 degrees to ensure good contact when gluing. ▹

Cutting the crown and initial treatment

5 I use an eclipse saw to cut the inner half-circle. Then I remove the inside of the ebony crown with a knife. Following the outlines, I gradually achieve a smooth surface, ready for the fitting of the back button.

Fitting the crown to the back button

6 The next part requires a good deal of care. I fit the crown in its place, check for small gaps, and then, using a knife, remove small shavings from it, repeating the process until the fit is perfect. Then I finish with a file to obtain a better gluing surface. I pay attention to both notches on the back, which provide additional strength and stability. At this point I also reduce the thickness of the crown so that it is almost equal to that of the back.



Gluing

7 I use hot animal glue to attach the crown. There are two ways to tighten it. One of them involves using a clamp to hold the crown and is similar to the method for fitting the neck to the body. I prefer the second method, which utilises paper tape to help tighten the crown and hold it in place, both to the back and the heel of the neck. With the tape it is possible to tighten in all directions.

Final shaping

8 Once the glue is completely dry, I continue shaping. First I take away material from the crown with a knife until the crown aligns with the neck. Then I continue with a file and finish with a scraper until the button is complete and the ebony crown is fitted in place. The result is an identical violin button with the same shape and dimensions as the original one (from the template). Using a file, I even out the thickness of the crown with that of the back button. I finish the process by making a chamfer on the new button.

TRANSLATION BY ROSICA DIMITROVA

FERDINANDO GARIMBERTI

WRITTEN BY RAINER MICHAEL COCRON

Born into a hard-working family in Parma in 1894, Ferdinando Garimberti is today considered one of the most important representatives of the modern Milanese school, and indeed among the most important Italian violin makers of the 20th century. Cremona is indebted to him for the role he played in the city's acquisition of the 1715 'Il Cremonese' Stradivari and for passing on his knowledge to a new generation of makers at the International School of Violin Making.

After the family's move to Milan, the young Garimberti began an apprenticeship as a metalworker until an accident in 1912 forced him to look for an alternative occupation. One regular visitor to his parents' *osteria* was Romeo Antoniazzi, who introduced Ferdinando to lutherie. Soon he was taken on by Romeo's brother Riccardo, continuing under his tutelage until the latter's death. The next years saw him work for Leandro Bisiach and Giuseppe Pedrazzini, complete military service during World War I, marry Maria Zanello, move to Turin to work for Fiat, and open a wine shop. The 1920s marked his return to Milan and violin making.

The instrument shown here was made during a period of change in Garimberti's life. He resurrected a relationship with the Bisiach and Pedrazzini workshops in the early 1920s. His father committed suicide in 1924. Then in early 1925 Mussolini effectively became dictator of Italy. These events formed the backdrop to the making of this violin.

MAKER
FERDINANDO GARIMBERTI

NATIONALITY
ITALIAN

BORN
1894

DIED
1982

INSTRUMENT
VIOLIN

DATE
1925

MODEL

This violin is based on a Stradivari model, a Milanese interpretation of the 'G' form, well proportioned with a bold outline. The shape and placement of the f-holes are reminiscent of the Bisiachs' work. The finish is clean yet never pedantic, and the softness of lines, especially those of the scroll with its rounded chamfers and deep volute, ensure a pleasing appearance overall.

MATERIALS

The front of this violin is made from a lovely piece of spruce of even, narrow grain, which is highlighted by striking medullary rays. The back and ribs are made from a stunning piece of maple cut on the slab, a favourite choice throughout Garimberti's career. The visual effect of this is especially satisfying on the back. The wood of the head is cut on the quarter. Linings and blocks are made from willow and are neatly finished. The top-block bears the maker's brand.

EDGEWORK AND PURFLING

Made from ebony and poplar, the purfling is placed close to the edges and is of extraordinary precision. The outer ebony strip sits raised on the edge, while the inner strip is at the bottom of the fluting, thus stylistically forming part of the edgework and framing the instrument beautifully. Garimberti highlighted this effect by rubbing off some of the varnish on the edges. An elegant but simple purfling joint marks the corners, as Garimberti mostly abstained from long bee-stings.

VARNISH

On this violin, the varnish is oil-based and of a reddish-brown colour, richly applied and soft in texture, showcasing beautiful craquelure. It gives the instrument a very warm and harmonious appearance, revealing the maker's typical yellow ground where it has worn off. ▹

ALL PHOTOS RICHARD VALENCIA

MY SPACE

A peek into lutherie workshops around the world

LUTHIER

FLORIAN BARTSCH

LOCATION

Essen, Germany

Geigenbau Bartsch has been here in Essen, north-west Germany, since 1903, but we've only been based in this workshop for the past two and a half years. It's a result of the pandemic: there used to be a gymnastics studio next door to the shop, but the business fell prey to the lockdowns and folded in 2020. Then the landlord asked if we'd like to take over the space, and after ten minutes of discussion we decided to do it. During Covid, our business dropped by around a third, but it's now back to pre-pandemic levels; sadly, some of the freelance musicians we used to see regularly have taken other jobs and not returned. At least my father Johann managed to complete a new violin during that time, anyway, with a label that reads: 'Johann Bartsch Coroniensis'!

The new workshop is 110 sq m, and we still have access to the old one, which you can see through the window. So in total we have 190 sq m, which includes the showroom where we keep most of our instruments. All four of us work in a line in front of the windows, and we all have our preferred chairs; I have the small wooden one, but as I spend as much time in the office as the workshop, perhaps it's right for me to have the least comfortable seat!

Essen is a musical city with several orchestras, a music college and a high standard of amateur playing. For this reason, most of our work revolves around restoration and repair, but we still make the occasional new instrument as well.

The firm was founded 120 years ago on the other side of the road, but we moved into this building in 1974. Even now, we still get people coming in asking: 'I had trouble finding you – last time I was here, you were on the other side!' Maybe it's a sign of how much our customers are inclined to come back – but at least they must have had a memorable experience last time!

INTERVIEW BY CHRISTIAN LLOYD

We always have classical music playing while we're working, and the radio is always tuned to the German classical channel WDR-3. Both my father and I play the cello, and both the others in the workshop are violinists.

Behind the viola on my workbench you can see an iPad. This is connected to a CCTV camera so we can monitor the showroom if we're all working together. Sometimes we are so engrossed in our work that we don't notice when customers have arrived.

ALL PHOTOS FLORIAN BARTSCH

Even though we now have a lot of space in the 'new' workshop, we still store a lot of wood, material and tools in the old one. The nice thing about it is that we are always on the move when we need something for our work.

Right There are probably around 250 instruments in our showroom right now, including a few violas da gamba. We don't sell many but it's nice to be able to show them off.

On this mobile bench we have an electrical jigsaw for carving bridges, a grinding wheel for sharpening tools and a heater where we can warm hide glue. It's good to have these things in a place where all of us can access them easily.

This high bench is good for standing up while planing or roughing out cello backs. All these benches are on castors, which makes it easy to move them around. Each month we have a recital in the workshop, when we need to make space.

With 20 per cent extra

Five-string cellos are becoming increasingly popular, and not just for playing Bach's Suite no.6. **David Folland** gives some practical tips, based on his recent experience of building one

The five-string bridge needed to be designed from scratch

Cellists are aware that Bach's Cello Suite no.6 BWV1012 was written for an instrument other than the four-string cello. It may have been the violoncello da spalla, essentially a small cello played like a viola. Using a five-string cello with a high E string greatly facilitates the playing of this suite. This cello, which originally had gut strings, required a shorter body and string length than a standard full-size cello; using a gut E string works much better at a shorter length because the tension can be lower. Tensioning a full-length gut E string to pitch can strain the limits of the material, so most five-string cellos are sized similarly to a 3/4 size, which can compromise their size of sound. However, with the advent of modern composite strings, several string manufacturers now produce a high cello E string that is very suitable for use on a full-size cello, enabling five-string players to produce a bigger and more powerful sound, particularly on the G and C strings.

When I was commissioned to build a five-string cello, the cellist mainly wanted to use it for playing the Bach Suites, but did not want to give up the depth and power of a modern full-size cello. He also intended to use it to play solo works and chamber pieces composed for a four-string cello, but which he enjoys playing on the five-string. Indeed, the last several decades have seen a gain in popularity for full-size five-string cellos using modern strings, and they are now being used for much more than playing the Bach Suites. This modern five-string can give the player additional range and an increased tonal palette. It can help them open up new dimensions of sound, create compositional effects and push boundaries in many musical genres. And what's more, it can be fun! Finally, a five-string may be helpful for a player with shoulder injuries because, instead of having to use thumb position, they can play those notes using fourth position on the E string.

> THE NON-GUT E STRING IS VERY THIN AND GENERATES RELATIVELY LITTLE EXTRA PRESSURE

A common misconception when designing a five-string is perhaps the idea that it must be made stronger to withstand the pressure of the additional string. But the non-gut E string is very thin and generates relatively little extra pressure on the top plate, so the cello body can be constructed essentially the same as a four-string, with similar rib and plate thicknesses, bass-bar dimensions and f-hole size and placement widths. However, there is a need to think carefully about the top arch and the fingerboard extension height on a five-string. Positioning the strings across the top arc of the bridge increases the bow angle on the treble and bass strings, meaning the bow has more difficulty clearing the C-bouts if the bridge and/or the arching heights are too low. In addition, using a very wide cello pattern would likely contribute to bow clearance issues.

The outline is a slightly widened version of the Stradivari 'B form'

In making the five-string cello I used my usual outline, which is basically a slightly widened Stradivari 'B form' outline. The distance between the C-bouts on my outline is 240mm. I arched the top plate to a height of 28.5mm, a little higher than I usually make my top arching, to help keep the bow from hitting the C-bouts.

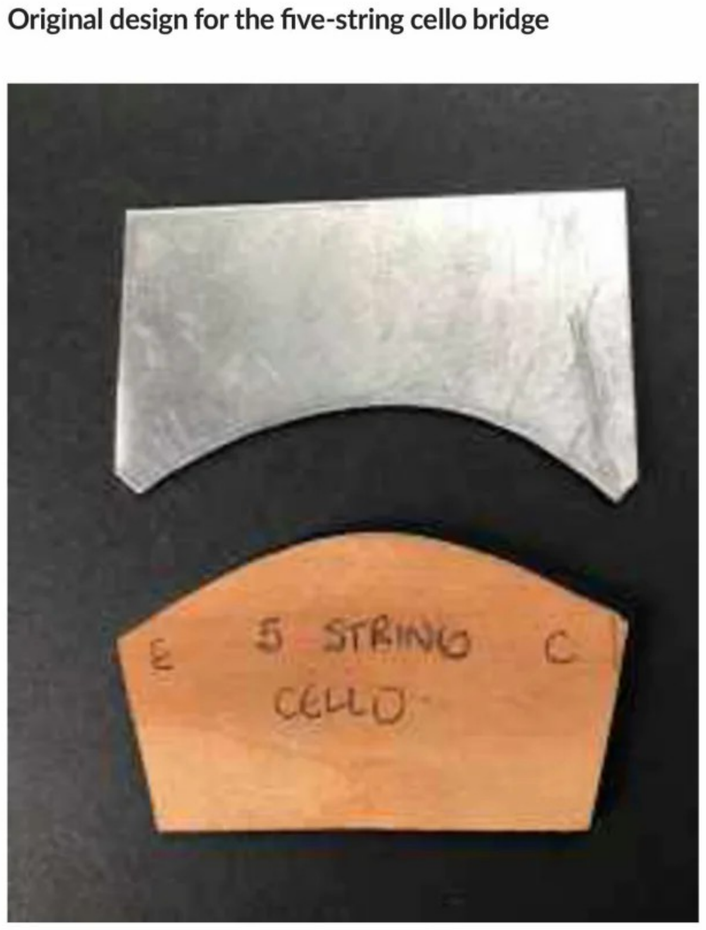
The neck was set to an extension height of 84mm, with an overstand of 25.75mm on the treble side and 24.25mm on the bass side. This neckset, also a bit higher than on my four-string, helped get the bridge higher and again gave the bow more clearance over the C-bouts without increasing the neck angle over the bridge. The neck length was 280mm, the same as a four-string. These dimensions produced a very responsive instrument with no issues regarding playability.

The main differences between a four- and five-string cello arise in the neck, fingerboard and scroll. The fingerboard length is a normal 579mm, but the widths are much greater since there are five strings: 29mm at the scroll end and 725mm at the bridge end. The arc is just slightly flatter than that of a four-string fingerboard, and is asymmetrical. I ended up needing to use a double bass fingerboard blank, as I could find no suitable cello ebony blanks that were wide enough.

The scroll pegbox needs to be lengthened by about 28mm to accommodate the extra peg, which is on the treble side. The width of the pegbox at the nut is considerably wider at 54mm, and tapers down to about 33.5mm at the throat. The scroll itself is just very slightly larger and wider to balance the larger pegbox size. Of course, the neck will end up being wider to match the fingerboard, but the neck thicknesses are the same as on a four-string, as is the distance from the top edge to the inside curve of the heel.

I designed my own bridge and cut it out of a wedge of bridge wood, as I could not find any non-Baroque five-string bridge blanks. Milo Stamm will cut a bridge blank to your specifications if you send him a pattern. I made the bridge feet 93mm wide and the top of the bridge 73mm wide to accommodate the extra strings. The centre-to-centre distance between the outside strings is 62.5mm. I used a Spirocore tungsten C and G string, and Larsen solo D and A strings with a Larsen E string. Sprirocore and Jargar also make a cello E string, but the Larsen was a better match for the rest of the strings on the cello.

Both the cellist and I were very happy with the cello. I was not at all sure if putting on that extra treble string wouldn't adversely affect it and constrict the sound. But with the first notes drawn by the bow, those fears were put to rest. The cello sounded very much like what we were going for: a great big full cello sound, except with a high E. Pretty cool. ●



Original design for the five-string cello bridge

Bridge and fingerboard templates

Scroll and pegbox pattern for the five-string cello

ALL PHOTOS DAVID FOLLAND

MASTERCLASS

SCHUBERT STRING QUARTET IN G MAJOR, FIRST MOVEMENT

Xandi van Dijk, violist of the Signum Quartet, uncovers the details of interpretation that help us relate to a movement of such broad scope

From Schubert String Quartet in G major, Op.161 D887. Urtext edition, paperbound. Ed. Egon Voss. Order no. HN 850. ISMN 979-0-2018-0850-5. €23.00. Printed with permission of G. Henle Verlag, München © 2010.

Every time one returns to a piece of music it should be with fresh ears and another layer of understanding, and we are grateful to have had the opportunity to do that many times with this work. Being the last and longest of Schubert's string quartets, it has a justifiably weighty reputation. He intended it to pave the way for the great symphony he had been working on and there's no doubt it is symphonic in scope.

Outbursts and consolation

This large-scale intention is clearly reflected in the dramatic opening. But we are quickly transported to something more lyrical, and after the violent eruptions and the mood swings that Schubert is so fond of, coming to the first subject at bar 15 is just wonderful. It is one of the holy moments of quartet literature. Florian, our first violinist, is a very creative and delicate player and, speaking as the violist in the quartet, it is just a joy to follow him through that theme.

It seems even more restful in retrospect after the return of the explosive opening figure in bar 33, which begins a transition that somehow leaves us in F sharp major 30 bars later. With the second subject from bar 65, Schubert gravitates back through keys closer to home but he manages to circumvent landing on anything that feels like a tonic for too long. It gives the second subject a weightless quality, and one has this feeling of constantly being in motion. Pianist Alfred Brendel talks about moments like bar 78, with the first violin playing triplets over the top of the second subject, as 'somnambulation' in Schubert's music.

We return to a very different reality with the fortissimo in bar 90. In fact, it is marked *fff* in the autograph and however tricky to manage in terms of pacing, it does

IRÈNE ZANDEL

THE SOLOIST

NAME
XANDI VAN DIJK

NATIONALITY
SOUTH AFRICAN

MENTORS
ALBAN BERG QUARTET, ARTEMIS QUARTET, JÖRG WIDMANN, ALEXANDER LONQUICH

RECORDS FOR
PENTATONE

'What were wild semiquavers gusting around the fanfares are now turned into something much more consoling'

The most recent release in the Signum Quartet's *Schubert Experience* series is the album *Lebensmuth*, featuring the Quartet in G major D887. Listen on Soundcloud here: bitly.ws/LPVY

appear that Schubert wanted an extreme here. The former gentle second subject idea is transformed into something with militaristic connotations by the blaring fanfares, as in bar 93, and the agitation of the triplet idea. I see it as impressions of the Napoleonic wars still in Schubert's being, and it is an overwhelming and shattering moment when it first appears, ripping us out of our dream state.

The unison in bar 106 doesn't have the driving characteristic of before, as we are being led to a calmer place. In technical terms we use a broader stroke and aim for more air in the sound, both for the purpose of blending and to find a different character. The military fanfares and triplet treatment feature again in the section from bar 122 and because they are only marked forte this time, perhaps one can find a character in the new key that's slightly less manic than the first time it comes.

And then we come to the viola solo, which is exceptional in Schubert's quartets for shining a spotlight on the instrument for a complete melodic statement. It's wonderfully written. In contrast to the more introverted cello solo before (bars 110–121), the viola solo from bar 142 has more of the lilt inherent in the second subject. It brings together all the different facets of the theme so far, with the sleepwalking triplet idea over the top and the pizzicato accompanying figure from before.

Light and shade: the tension between major and minor

The passage from bar 154 brings some ominous rumblings in the shape of F naturals when we thought we had arrived in D major, but on the whole it's of a more positive nature, culminating in bar 164 with a sequence of oscillating chords. The pianist Alexander Lonquich, with whom we have worked a little on this piece, describes them as 'Alpine' because of the bucolic effect they bring to the end of this section and the whole movement.

One of the arguments for observing the repeat in an already long movement is that you get a chance to hear the cello's winding bass-line in bars 168–172 twice, and it's such an important part of the development. The upper strings offer glimpses of light and shade in response. In bar 170 and 174, which are in the higher register, I might play on the A string to find more brightness and go for a compact and defined bow stroke: almost off the string. And by contrast we would find a stroke with more air in the sound in bar 172 to express shade. Out of this comes the consoling thematic variation from bar 180, with the viola providing rhythmic counterpoint to the first violin's graceful melody.

Tremolo forms the backdrop here and, in a similar way to the beginning, there is a looseness to it that leads nicely into the triplet tremolo and contrasts with the more nervous effect from bar 201. From bar 180 we tend to play more sul tasto, with a slower stroke, and from bar 201 with a brighter sound and a faster stroke. The triplet tremolo idea that comes in between, from bar 191, is one place where we really try to copy each other's sound, because it contributes to the spatial effect of the writing when this material is shared seamlessly between the parts.

Finding clarity in the middle of the texture

The semiquavers (𝅘𝅥𝅯), which made a charming countermelody to the cello line in bars 201–209, now swirl around the explosive opening idea from bar 210 in another sudden outburst. The challenge here for the viola is when the sustained notes are shared between two rather than three instruments, and the double-stops have to assume double intensity. Achieving the necessary clarity with double-stops in the middle of the texture is a major consideration at different points throughout the movement, and I find an open string very useful for centring our intonation; for example, towards the end of the first section in bar 51. And then there are certain bars, particularly bar 356 onwards in the recapitulation, that are simply very tricky and require delicate balancing with the other inner part.

Harmonic direction

Without having to go into great depth to analyse the music, it is very helpful to think in terms of harmonic standpoints for each section in this movement; not least bars 252 to the recapitulation at bar 278. Rather than writing expansive melodies, Schubert tends to use thematic fragments to build the music in a play of tension between major and minor. To have a very clear sense of where one is in the longer harmonic line, how far from home and where the next home might be, helps in taking the listener on the journey, which is a crucial part of the drama. What is happening harmonically is the foreground, in a way, rather than just being there to underline a beautiful melody.

Through the long diminuendo from bar 269 and the gentle slow-up that comes naturally after the accelerando, everything points to the tonic minor and it is only the famous 'celestial harp' pizzicato figure in the violin which suggests that the recapitulation will be in the major key.

Everything about the recapitulation is different and more gentle. The militaristic dotted figures are softened into the tender quaver (𝅘𝅥𝅮) figures we find in bars 280–281, for example, and what were wild semiquavers gusting around the fanfares are now turned into something much more consoling with the figure in the first violin from bar 292. Even the dotted minim (𝅗𝅥.) figure, previously so charged with explosive energy, somehow sounds triumphant at bar 310, and full of joy.

The play between major and minor sustains the movement right to the end, with the final fanfare figures of the violins, ending on G minor chords, sounds like a slap in the face. These are swatted back by the figures in the lower strings that end on G major chords, until the briefest final unified statement. ▷

INTERVIEW BY HELENA RUINARD

Quartett

Viola

Komponiert 1826

D 887
op. post. 161

Allegro molto moderato

70
(decresc.)
75
(cresc.)
(pp)
81
87
(cresc.
ff)
93
more lower E
98
(ff)
102
(p)
106
(f
p
pp)
pizz.
(pp)
(as bass)
111
117
(decresc.)
122
arco
(f)

128
133
137
(f
p
pp)
(p)
142
148
decresc.
(cresc.)
154
(f)
p
pizz.
arco
f)
159
p)
(cresc.)
163
(f
decresc.
p
pp)
168
1.
2.
(p
f)
(pp)
172
(cresc.)
178
(f
p)
(pp)
184
poco

arco
split as comfortable/necessary
(cresc.)
(decresc.)

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369
(f)
375
380
385
(f
p)
(decresc.)
pizz.
(pp)
392
(decresc.)
399
(cresc.)
arco
(f)
(p)
405
arco
(f)
pizz.
(cresc.)
410
(f)
(decresc.
p
pp)
415
(pp)
423
(cresc.
ff)
(fz)
(fz)
430
(p
fz
f
(p)
cresc.
fz
436
mf
ffz
mf
ffz

Arriving in style

Teaching bow landings with special reference to Mozart

GINA McCORMACK

Tutor in violin at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, UK

BORN
Cape Town, South Africa

STUDIED WITH
Pierre de Groote, György Pauk, Sándor Végh

TEACHES
Undergraduate and postgraduate conservatoire students, private students (all ages)

Instead of thinking about the angle and position of the bowing arm on landing, violinists tend to focus on what happens when the bowing-arm fingers meet the string. This is apt to cause problems, especially in concert situations when the upper arm can become tense, causing the fingers to stiffen.

All too often students land on a note on the G string and wonder why it crunches, then land the same way on a note on the E string and look mystified that it works brilliantly. They haven't fully explored what they need to do on each string to make the sound they want in a reliable way.

To gain greater understanding of this and to create a feeling of freedom in playing, it is important to pay attention to the role of the whole arm as a starting point, and especially to the elbow and the space around it. Often the way that gravity works means that the right-hand elbow droops, with all sorts of undesirable consequences.

Here the focus is on Mozart, whose music demands subtle bow control to make it sound natural and easy, with articulation that matches the nuances and variety of speech.

THE MINDSET

- Factor in the physics. Consider gravity and what happens to a bow when it lands on a string; this should be your number one go-to when thinking about the way your bow connects with the string on impact.
- The position of your right arm in the air is vital to any bow landing, while your fingers on the bow should be strong but cushioned
- Different bow landings require an individual approach to give character to your playing:
    - Some articulation can be achieved with the arm alone; whether delicate or energetic. Experiment with this, rather than automatically choosing to articulate the notes with your fingers. You can always add the fingers later to create an accent or more of a martelé.
    - Sense the angle of each string when you land, keeping wrist and fingers comfortably aligned with that level. Your arm will tilt as you cross strings. Remember, any extraneous or sudden movement of the wrist or fingers will affect the landing.
- If you want a deep warm sound with a 'waa' beginning, imagine an aeroplane landing when you approach the string; the depth of your arm into the string will give you the volume and richness.
- If you want attack, consider the energy in the arm before deciding on the role of the wrist and fingers, and don't forget to inject momentum into the up-beat, whether you are playing it or whether the up-beat is silent. This will add a sense of freedom to your playing.

IAN HUGHES

EXERCISES

- Play eight staccato notes on each open string. Set the contact point, raise the arm above the string, then focus on the arm and elbow creating even cup shapes in the air.
- Practise a scale with triplet quavers (♪) on each degree of the scale aiming for even notes
- To change from on-the-string to off-the-string landings, grade your arm levels. Think of a bookshelf (top shelf G, then D, A and E lower by varying increments). Imagine that there is a little extra shelf above each of these for staccato playing. Practise bowing four legato notes on each string with short bows, then four staccato notes; adjust the level of your arm to the appropriate shelf before making each type of stroke.
- Rode's Caprice no.17 is great for exploring staccato landings across all strings (it includes couplets and on-the-string notes that need an immediate adjustment of arm level to work well)

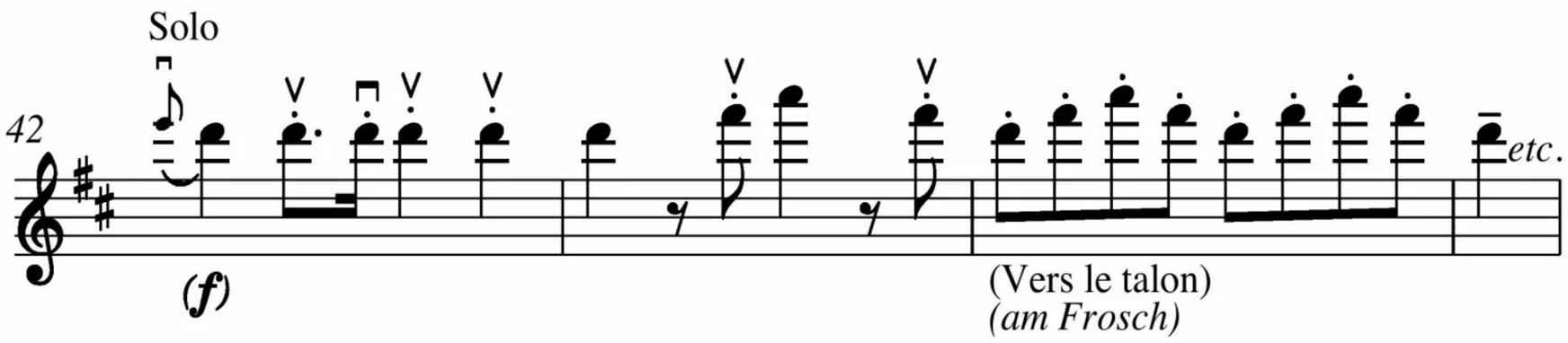
REPERTOIRE

The first solo note of Mozart's Violin Concerto no.4 (**example 1**) is played on the E string. It should be played with energy and spirit from above the string after a strong gestured up-beat in the air. There is a tendency for students to play it by bowing in a straight line. This results in a shrill and skiddy sound after the initial attack, like a skier leaning backwards instead of forwards, and therefore going down the slopes far too fast. With the level of gravity caused by playing on the E string, it is essential to play a C shape against the string at the frog using the third and fourth fingers to control it. This will slow the bow down and enable the player to grip the string and play deeply into it, generating a good, resonant tone. The balance of the fingers on the bowing hand changes towards the point, in favour of the first two fingers. Gravity will hold the bow to the string at the end of the first note unless you remove your arm weight to let the note resonate.

Return into the string on the second beat, following the same path, but with a different energy for the weaker beat. Beats three and four will have different landings, created by the arm, showing a sense of direction to the next bar. The first landing is deep and plate-shaped, while the second is like a bowl, but played with a lighter arm weight towards the frog.

For the start of the second bar, try lowering the arm to play a C shape to avoid a shudder. When you retake in the quaver rests, raise the arm above string level for a good bowl-shaped landing. Lighten the arm as you are in the lower half, and then lower the arm back to string level for the plate-shaped crotchet (♩) landing. For bar 3, make sure your arm creates symmetrical bowl-shapes by creating the curve into the air at the end of down bows as otherwise gravity makes the bow to cling to the string.

EXAMPLE 1 From Mozart Violin Concerto no.4 in D major K218, first movement

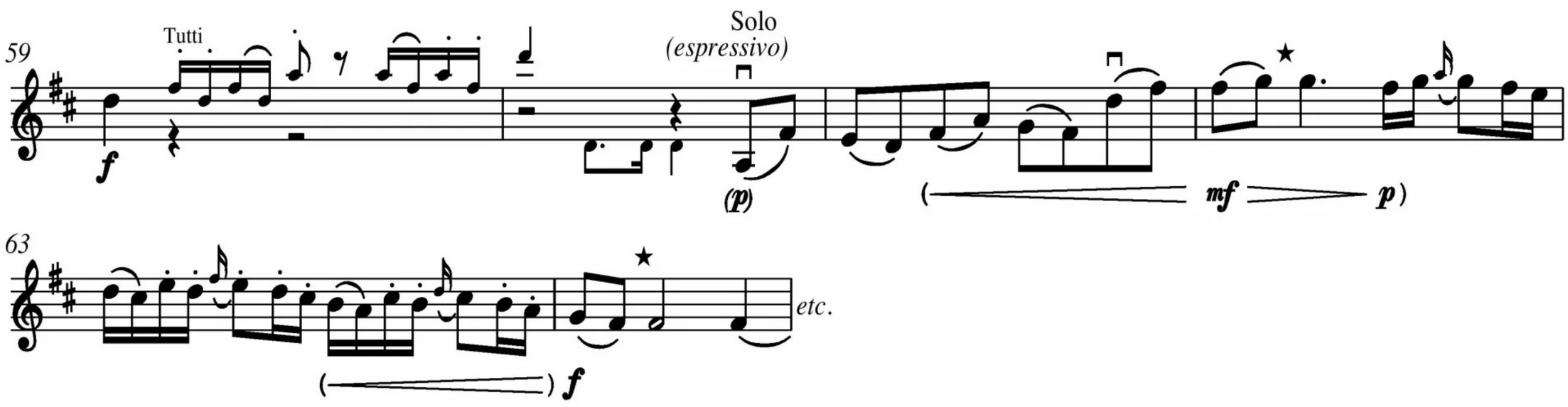


When playing the couplets in **example 2** (on the next page), decide how to play them. Use your arm accordingly, employing the bowl-shape idea. Less bow with more curve will mean that the second note will sound more clipped, sounding livelier. If your arm lifts out of the string in more of a plate shape, it will sound gentler.

To play two same-pitched notes at the end of a phrase (marked ✯ in example 2), take the arm out of the string (bowl-shape) to create the end of one 'word' and the start of the next. Exaggerate this at the point of the bow where it's harder to end a note elegantly.

Listen carefully and if you want to make adjustments remember to check out the bigger picture, not just the fingers. ▹

EXAMPLE 2 From Mozart Violin Concerto no.4 in D major K218, first movement



IN YOUR PRACTICE

- Our instincts are good if we sing. Sing the passage you are practising as you'd like it to sound (observing which consonants you naturally use to express the phrase). Then play it, trying to match the note lengths and consonants that you sang.
- Practise bow landings in all parts of the bow, taking them out of context each time. When landing at the point, don't wait above the string – the longer you wait the harder it is to land; first build impetus in the arm by moving in a down-bow direction with your up-beat breath, and imagine a pendulum for a smooth landing.
- Sometimes practise arm movements in the air without allowing the bow to hit the string, especially for a strong attack. The energy in the arm should be visible and should match the character of the music you are going to play; use a mirror to check that the movement looks good. Then think about the landing itself, bearing in mind the string you are landing on.
- Remember: listening is everything, and we can always create a better sound

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- Feel empowered to experiment when you teach; it is not all about following rules. Tailor to the individual, especially in your use of analogies.
- Choose two or four bars of a student's piece and work them like a study, isolating particular aspects. Students can then immediately appreciate the context, and can also apply this way of working elsewhere, as appropriate.
- Use the visual; I have a few props including a pad of scrap paper alongside me when I teach (drawing a wedge of cheese is great for explaining bow angles)
- Engage your student with the process of experimentation so that they learn to listen more perceptively for themselves, and to understand what they need to do to create the sound they wish to make. Explain how to create crunches and skids and other non-ideal sounds: that way students will understand how to avoid them.
- Explain why you want them to practise a particular aspect of their playing and share your thought processes with them. When I play staccato landings, for example, I think about my elbow, not what I'm doing near the string. (I'm making cup, bowl or plate shapes with my elbow).
- Be on the lookout for stiff upper right arms, which cause staccato bow landings to crack and sound 'bashy' (envisaging the arm as a sack of potatoes often helps the arm to relax). Also beware stiff fingers on the bow; fingers should curl and cushion like shock absorbers, but still be strong enough to support the tip of the bow so that the bow becomes part of the whole arm.

INTERVIEW BY NAOMI YANDELL

FURTHER MATERIALS

Science and the natural world have always influenced my work. Here are two thought-provoking links:

Pendulums and energy:
a useful simple explanation of gravity/mass/height
bitly.ws/Lje5

Skimming/skipping stones:
an interesting article on this, which has much in common with bowing
bitly.ws/Ljed

NEXT MONTH
Violist Stephen King on switching from violin to viola

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Handel meets Szymanowski in **James Ehnes**' scintillating recital

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A Scandinavian discovery from the **Nordic Quartet**

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Nils Økland: a joyous partnership of Hardanger fiddle and harmonium

PAGE 123

Oslo

Pekka Kuusisto's NCO on surreal form

NORWEGIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA/ PEKKA KUUSISTO (VIOLIN)

OSLO OPERA HOUSE 6 JUNE 2023

How best to describe the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra's performances at the Oslo Opera, *DSCH*? Imagine an opera chorus, acting and dancing on stage in costume, but playing stringed instruments from memory rather than singing. It was a play without words, whose opaque narrative hinted at the totalitarianism of Soviet Russia but otherwise invited us to project individual stories on to it.

Across 90 minutes of Shostakovich's music we heard the entire *Chamber Symphony* as scored, and excerpts from assorted chamber works and concertos mostly arranged by the NCO's own Øystein Sonstad. Accordionist Bjarke Mogensen, the only non-string player on stage, adeptly stepped in to shape-shift his versatile instrument into a piano or woodwind choir.

Some passages from director Mikkel Harder Munck-Hansen communicated with more focus than others. There was a memorable scene in a railway carriage set to a knotty fugue. During a solo in the *Chamber Symphony*, there was a lone cellist being interrogated by torchlight. Against the nervous energy of the Allegretto from the First Cello Concerto, NCO artistic director Pekka Kuusisto strode across the stage in a ludicrous hat whacking a bass drum.

It was unfailingly evocative, and drew laughter and shock from the audience. Just as interesting was how dramatic, choreographed physical gestures had a direct and bolstering effect on phrasing and ensemble unity, amplifying the NCO's muscular sound rather than obscuring it. Something was released – freed – in its players. Certainly, this could be the start of something.

ANDREW MELLOR

MAGNUS SKREDE

To browse through more than a decade of *The Strad*'s recording reviews, visit **www.thestrad.com/reviews**

New York

CURTIS STEWART (VIOLIN)

KAUFMAN MUSIC CENTER, MERKIN CONCERT HALL
1 JUNE 2023

Violinist and composer Curtis Stewart presented a profound and deeply moving evening as a part of the Ecstatic Music Series at the Kaufman Music Center this June, sharing the stage with a number of musicians and dedicating the performance to the memory and legacy of his mother.

Stewart began the programme with excerpts from his new album *Of Love / of time* and his solo violin playing was brilliant and passionate; he often accompanied himself by utilising electronics and a loop pedal, as well as singing and speaking in a performance that reached an impassioned climax before dissolving away into tenderness. Pianist Aaron Diehl joined him for several numbers to close the first half of the concert.

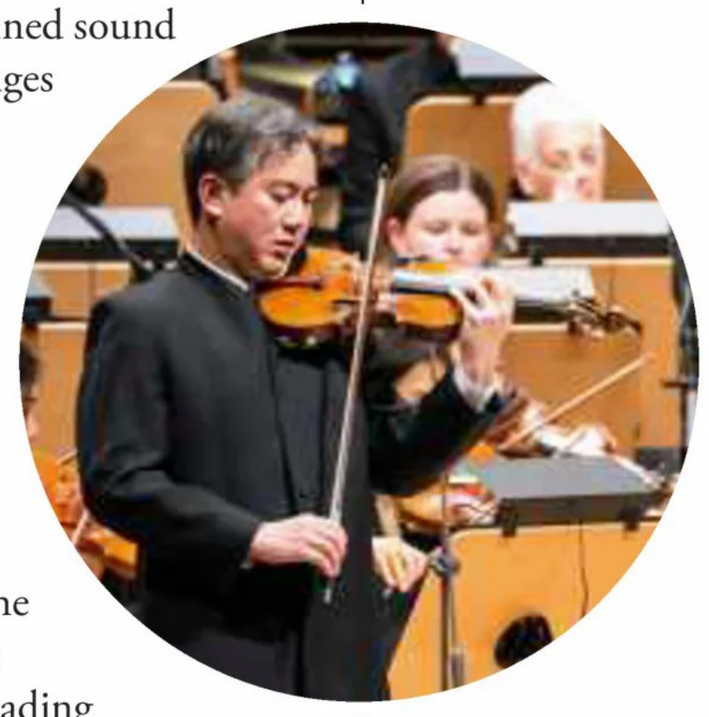
A large string orchestra then joined Stewart for his own improvisation on *Take the 'A' Train*, which also included electronics, rap and projections. The world premiere of *Embrace,* 'a violin concerto for strings and community conversation' followed, and Stewart played this work inspired by his mother with poignancy and precision. Three selections from *24 Negro Melodies* by Coleridge-Taylor brought luscious string sound and virtuosic violin playing. *KNIGHT Music*, a piece by Stewart based on Joseph Bologne's Ninth Violin Concerto, was a brilliant mix of Bologne and Stewart: the combination of wit, flair and wild abandon was impressive. The evening ended with a poignant and profound work that was part spoken ('a prayer to my mom', Stewart said), part solo violin, part electronics. I'm not sure if I found the concert self-indulgent or utterly brilliant, but the enthusiastic audience was in no doubt.

LEAH HOLLINGSWORTH

FRANK HUANG (VIOLIN) NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC/JAAP VAN ZWEDEN

DAVID GEFFEN HALL 3 JUNE 2023

Playing in front of one's own colleagues is perhaps the most challenging of feats, and concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic Frank Huang handled it with grace and poise, performing Sibelius's Violin Concerto to a packed house three nights in a row. His opening violin cadenza had a careful attention to timing and a beautifully sustained sound thanks to silky smooth bow changes and impressive control. Long phrases in the Adagio soared above the rich orchestral sound and Huang's sweet tone and tasteful vibrato enchanted. Huang brought whimsy and a nice spirit to the final Allegro, and, while I wondered if the tempo was exactly his choice, he brought flair and dynamism to the music, concluding a reading that proved him not just capable of leading one of the world's greatest orchestras, but also more than capable of standing before it too.



Sweet tone and tasteful vibrato from Frank Huang

CHRIS LEE

Julia Wolfe's New York Philharmonic commission *unEarth* received its world premiere after the interval; this was a profound and complex experience featuring singers (a children's chorus, a men's chorus and soprano soloist Else Torp), projections, choreography and a full stage of musicians. The piercing purity of Torp's voice was arresting in the second movement and the orchestra played with power, commitment and vibrancy throughout – even if it sometimes served as a bit of a backdrop to the work's other elements. The message of the dangers of climate change and our role and responsibility to tend to our planet were powerfully clear, and bravo to the Philharmonic for taking on such an important project and multifaceted work.

LEAH HOLLINGSWORTH

Bowdoin

AYANO NINOMIYA, PETER WINOGRAD (VIOLINS) DIMITRI MURRATH, PHILIP YING (VIOLAS) STEVEN DOANE (CELLO) JEREMY MCCOY (BASS) LINDA CHESIS (FLUTE), PEI-SHAN LEE (PIANO)

STUDZINSKI RECITAL HALL 28 JUNE 2023

A few minutes after violist Philip Ying – an artistic director of the Bowdoin International Music Festival, now in its 59th year – introduced this evening, he joined bassist Jeremy McCoy and flautist Linda Chesis for Schulhoff's *Concertino*. It's a delightful

work that deserves wider exposure. Starting with the opening low rumblings for viola and bass, the ingenious orchestration highlights pairs of instruments, sometimes with a modal, primitive feel, like an ancient chant. For the Furiant, the two strings provided a handsome backdrop for the high-lying piccolo, and all three musicians contributed raucous energy in the folk-infused finale.

The evening began with another unusual trio, the Serenade by Kodály, for violinists Ayano Ninomiya and Peter Winograd with violist Dimitri Murrath. Its folk elements were also strongly characterised and the rollicking final movement brought cheers and whoops from the audience.

But for some, the real comfort food came last: Schubert's Piano Trio no.1, with Winograd joined by cellist Steven Doane and pianist Pei-Shan Lee. With all three players in exquisite balance, the composer's rivers of melody seemed effortless and, especially in the second movement, Doane's tonal bloom was most alluring. The prim third movement exuded a winsome air, with the two strings insouciantly following the piano's lead. And the finale, elegant in its proportions, alternated ferocity and grace, utterly confident in its gallop to the end.

BRUCE HODGES

ANI SCHNARCH, KURT SASSMANNSHAUS, AYANO NINOMIYA (VIOLINS) NATALIE BRENNECKE, DIMITRI MURRATH (VIOLAS) JEFFREY ZEIGLER (CELLO) JEREMY MCCOY (BASS) JUNE HAN (HARP) LINDA CHESIS (FLUTE) PEI-SHAN LEE, TAO LIN (PIANO)

STUDZINSKI RECITAL HALL, BOWDOIN 30 JUNE 2023

For Bloch's *Baal Shem*, violinist Ani Schnarch offered passionate advocacy, especially in the second movement ('Nigun'), showing her violin's hearty lower register, synchronised with Tao Lin's ominous piano rumblings.

Charming in its sophistication, Florent Schmitt's *Suite en rocaille* engaged a trio of strings – Kurt Sassmannshaus, Natalie Brennecke and Jeffrey Zeigler – with added embroidery from Linda Chesis on flute, and June Han on harp. The quintet was particularly enchanting in the graceful third-movement minuet.

Perhaps the evening's most intriguing rarity was the *Fantasia on themes of Marais* by John Tartaglia (1932–2018), a former violist with the Minnesota Orchestra, who was also a teacher and luthier. With Dimitri Murrath and Jeremy McCoy in sometimes-languid, sometimes-insouciant rapport, the duo brought the composer's pensive study to life, with glimpses of the 18th century flickering like a candle.

To end an eclectic evening, violinist Ayano Ninomiya and pianist Pei-Shan Lee plunged into the lush world of Richard Strauss's Violin Sonata, in which Ninomiya's long bow strokes contrasted with Lee's glittering counterpoint. Apart from the magnificent finale, I was moved by the middle movement – sensuous, tender and luminous.

BRUCE HODGES

Potsdam

DOROTHEE OBERLINGER (RECORDERS) NILS MÖNKEMEYER (VIOLA)

ORANGERIE 21 JUNE 2023

The ears of the audience at the Orangerie of Sanssouci Palace were first tickled by bourdon notes from Nils Mönkemeyer's viola, invisibly arriving from the back of the auditorium. Meanwhile, Dorothee Oberlinger walked in from the elongated hall's opposite end, bringing forth some strangely percussive sounds from her recorder. As both musicians reached the stage, their improvisatory gestures gradually grew into Hildegard von Bingen's hymn, *O Ecclesia*. These beautifully vocalised medieval strains segued seamlessly into Konstantia Gourzi's *messages between trees II,* an evocative piece written only last year for the present performers. Here the bourdon was taken over by a pre-recorded tape, while recorder and viola shared music inspired by the sounds of nature. The sound effects Oberlinger extracted from her array of recorders contrasted impressively with Mönkemeyer's trademark sweetness of tone. Later in the programme, the pair introduced another Gourzi commission: *dance for two* makes most effective use of Greek folk music's irregular rhythms while welding together the sounds of viola and recorder through cunning harmonics.

In the imitative phrases of Bach's Inventions and Canons, Oberlinger and Mönkemeyer seemed to dare each other to ever more intricate embellishments, but they were most moving in the static Adagio e piano from the Trio Sonata BWV1039, its missing third voice uncannily suggested by the consonance of the other two. On his own, Mönkemeyer contributed the Prelude from the G major Cello Suite, indulging in abundant rubato that arguably threatened the piece's momentum. Conversely, his free imagination seemed ideally attuned to Nicola Matteis's *Phantasy.* Some folk dances, running the gamut from Irish reels to Bartók's Romany-inspired duets, brought the recital to an exhilarating end.

CARLOS MARÍA SOLARE

A hugely imaginative programme from Nils Mönkemeyer and Dorothee Oberlinger

London

MODIGLIANI QUARTET

WIGMORE HALL 7 JUNE 2023

The Modigliani Quartet, 20 years old this year, opened with a lively account of Haydn's G major Quartet op.54 no.1. Its playing of the first movement was bright, brisk and colourful, and in the Allegretto the quiet playing of leader Amaury Coeytaux over metronomic quavers blossomed into rich, full sound. Cellist François Kieffer provided a fine, shapely quaver obbligato (and a smile) in the Trio of the Menuetto, and the players captured Haydn's humour in the vivacious finale.

In the UK premiere of Jean-Frédéric Neuburger's *High altitude* the Modigliani's glistening, vibrato-less playing in the opening high chorale impressed; Wolf's *Italian Serenade* was filled with irrepressible high spirits.

After the interval came a remarkable account of Beethoven's B flat major Quartet op.130. The first movement was as often delicate as it was robust, with a strong narrative line running through its many abrupt stops and starts. After the lightness and bustle of the Presto, the Andante con moto offered a graceful, urbane conversation. The Alla danza tedesca had an easy flow (without exaggeration of the hairpins) and the Cavatina was sublime. The players opted for the original *Grosse Fuge* finale, which had impressive contrapuntal clarity amid the fire of the opening section – played with ferocious energy – spectral playing in the meno mosso section and fervent intensity to follow. It was an astonishing performance.

TIM HOMFRAY

BORLETTI-BUITONI TRUST 20TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND: CLOSING CONCERT

WIGMORE HALL 11 JUNE 2023

It's a lofty list of almost 200 artists and ensembles who have received early-career support from the Borletti-Buitoni Trust since its 2003 inception by Ilaria Borletti-Buitoni, her late husband Franco Buitoni and their friend Mitsuko Uchida. Strings players alone include Alina Ibragimova, Augustin Hadelich, Gautier Capuçon and the Jerusalem, Heath and Pavel Haas quartets. Hence a weekend-long anniversary celebration whose final concert line-up was stellar even by Wigmore standards. Further BBT names were in the audience, some of whom had already performed, such as Timothy Ridout, and some who had not, such as recorder player Lucie Horsch. Essentially, the music world turned out to pay homage.

Quatuor Ébène opened the night with a Purcell Fantasia – warm, free, with subtle vibrato – and closed it with a spontaneous and unpredictable-feeling account of Ravel's String Quartet. Playful sparkle, febrile shimmering and throaty ardency: this reading had it all. Prolonged stillness reigned after the 'Très lent' third movement, and not even the between-movement retuning – the Wigmore aircon eased rather than obliterated London's heatwave – broke the overall mood. As Raphaël Merlin was unavailable, the younger Ukrainian cellist Aleksey Shadrin took his place, looking nervous, but visibly supported by the others.

Add a warmly received Schubert Rondo in B minor D895 from violinist Itamar Zorman and Uchida herself, and guitarist Sean Shibe and mezzo Ema Nikolovska bringing the house down with their English duo set from Dowland to Adès, and BBT's flag flew high.

CHARLOTTE GARDNER

Playful Ravel from Quatuor Ébène

WIGMORE PHOTO SIMON WEIR. POTSDAM PHOTO STEFAN GLOEDE

Reviews

RECORDINGS

FONDATION GAUTIER CAPUÇON PRESENTS...
CHAMINADE Piano Trio no.1 **POULENC** Cello Sonata **SCHUMANN** Papillons; Violin Sonata no.1
Sarah Jégou-Sageman (violin) Jeein You (cello) Martina Consonni (piano)
ERATO 5419764269

Promising artists emerge from Gautier Capuçon's foundation

Last year French cellist Gautier Capuçon established his foundation to support and champion young artists at the outset of their careers. This release is the organisation's second, featuring three of the 2022 laureates.

If Poulenc was in fact 'half monk, half rascal', as a critic once claimed, then cellist Jeein You (the youngest of the disc's three players, still in her early twenties) doesn't quite capture the latter quality. There could be more mischief, bite and whimsy, and a greater sense of knockabout interplay between the instruments in the first and third movements, but Poulenc the monk is released in the second-movement Cavatine: serene and with a touch of nocturnal magic.

Martina Consonni gives a suitably imaginative performance of Schumann's solo-piano character pieces *Papillons* and partners Sarah Jégou-Sageman in the composer's Violin Sonata no.1. For me, the first movement could take more of the 'passionate expression' that the score requests: it's as if a more stirring performance is just around the corner. Jégou-Sageman's playing is boldly confident, though, and in the second movement she deftly contrasts playfulness with profundity.

Chaminade's unjustly neglected First Piano Trio (written when she was 23) receives a committed performance, convincing in both momentum and its strong lyrical thread. The sparkling scherzo is balanced by a finale that is truly full-blooded.

EDWARD BHESANIA

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR Five Fantasiestücke op.5 **DVOŘÁK** String Quartet no.13 in G major op.106; Andante appassionato
Takács Quartet
HYPERION CDA68413

A striking coupling of familiar and unfamiliar reaps rewards

It's gratifying to see the name of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor on a high-profile release such as this. The two main works here come from the same year – 1895 – when Dvořák had recently returned from his directorship of the National Conservatory in New York and Coleridge-Taylor was a student at London's Royal College of Music.

The title of Coleridge-Taylor's *Five Fantasiestücke* may evoke Schumann, but the language is perhaps closer to Brahms, as might be expected of a pupil of Stanford. Coleridge-Taylor's idol Dvořák is in the mix too, whether in the mournful song of the Prelude or the tripping central Humoresque. There's also a Serenade that alternates sections in 5/4 and 6/4, an elegant Minuet and an irresistible closing Dance. Coleridge-Taylor entered the RCM as a violinist and his handling of string textures is innate, his harmonic imagination strikingly original. This isn't the work's first recording – that was made by Catalyst Quartet on Azica – but the skill and affection of the Takács make this recommendable on any terms.

Not that the Dvořák comes as any disappointment, for the Takács is steeped in his music. This is an ensemble of individuals, with the silvery violin of Edward Dusinberre singing over the rich-voiced inner parts provided by Harumi Rhodes and the quartet's newest member, Richard O'Neill, all underpinned by the self-effacing but insistent presence of András Fejér – the only remaining member of the original line-up. Its corporate sound glows in the generous acoustic of Monmouth's Wyastone Concert Hall. To close, an *Andante appassionato* that was originally intended as the slow movement of the A minor Quartet op.12: it's a characteristically Dvořákian outpouring of song that rounds off the programme rather beautifully.

DAVID THREASHER

BRIDGES
D. CONSTANTINIDES Violin Sonata **Y. CONSTANTINIDIS** Suite sur des mélodies populaires grecques du Dodécanèse **PAPANDOPULO** Meditation; Violin Sonata **TERZAKIS** Sonate infernale; Sprüche im Wind
Danae Papamattheou-Matschke (violin) Uwe Matschke (piano)
BIS BIS-2563

An enticing introduction to Greek violin works of the last century

The prospect of 20th-century Greek works for violin and piano might not immediately grab you, but Papamattheou-Matschke is a persuasive advocate, both in her performances with her father and in her booklet notes.

Any common Greek identity between the works is somewhat diluted by the other countries

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in which the composers settled. In Zagreb, Boris Papandopulo based his Violin Sonata around a Bosnian folk song, while Dinos Constantinides, who studied violin with DeLay and Galamian in New York in the 1960s, wrote his tautly composed sonata around a twelve-note row.

The beauty of Papamattheou-Matschke's sound on her 1760 Landolfi violin enhances these varied works and she approaches them with a sense of freedom and fantasy.

Her very pure intonation is noticeable in the most rewarding work on the disc, Dimitri Terzakis's *Sonate infernale*, based on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Terzakis uses micro-intervals in the violin line and writes in a linear style with many lengthy quasi-improvisatory solo passages, played with most eloquent expression by Papamattheou-Matschke.

The most obviously Greek work on the album, Yannis Constantinidis's Suite, is a charming and very approachable piece, perhaps reflecting his career in light music – six movements based on melodies from different Greek islands, played with engaging simplicity. The recorded sound is well-balanced and translucent.

JANET BANKS

HAAS String Quartet no.2 'From the Monkey Mountains' **JANÁČEK** String Quartets: no.1 'The Kreutzer Sonata'; no.2 'Intimate Letters'
Escher Quartet,
Colin Currie (percussion)
BIS BIS-2670

High-voltage interpretations from a prize-winning quartet

Love would seem to be the leitmotif that binds together this programme. Janáček's First Quartet is based on a Tolstoy novella of the same name and depicts a story about a husband who murders his wife in jealousy over her 'friendship' with a violinist. The Second Quartet, 'Intimate Letters', is inspired by Janáček's passion for Kamila Stösslová, 40 years his junior and – like the composer – married, while certain passages in Pavel Haas's Second Quartet reflect on his affair with the writer Maria Podešvová.

Emotions are in turmoil and an almost Expressionistic display of extremes can be found in all three works. The Escher players are like four finely tuned actors on stage, lending the drama a compelling narrative. The textures in both Janáček quartets are exquisitely clear, and the details of the scores are meticulously delivered. I particularly enjoyed the adroit speed changes, handled so naturally while maximising the theatrical nature of the invention.

Haas has a wildly original voice and would surely have been a major creative force in 20th-century music had his career not been brutally curtailed by the Nazis. Once again, the Escher, aided by Colin Currie, proves its palette of sounds is sufficiently rich to capture the vivid impressions of the countryside explored in Haas's work. The fine accompanying booklet by Michael Beckerman also provides the listener with a real insight into this music.

JOANNE TALBOT

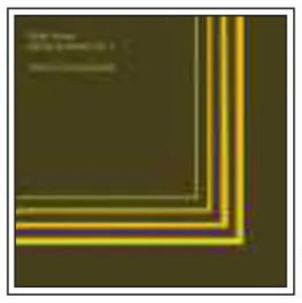
MYTHES
HANDEL Sonata in D major HWV371 **SZYMANOWSKI** Mythes op.30; works by **Grainger, Howard, Paradis, Ponce, Rimsky-Korsakov, Suk** and **Tchaikovsky**
James Ehnes (violin)
Andrew Armstrong (piano)
ONYX ONYX4234

Unusual programme is another winner from this distinguished partnership

This is an intriguing disc, with two highly contrasting main works and a collection of short pieces. In the first of Szymanowski's *Mythes*, 'La fontaine d'Arethuse', Ehnes, with his

Top-tier music making from James Ehnes

BEN EALOVEGA



The Nordic Quartet goes exploring

ever-excellent partner Andrew Armstrong, covers a lot of narrative ground, from the ethereal opening pages to the thrilling double-stopped F major climax and away to shimmering tremolos. In 'Narcisse' he gives a masterly demonstration of sustained lyrical playing as he traverses Szymanowski's erotic landscape, and in 'Dryades et Pan' he conjures up a lascivious and decidedly creepy Pan emerging from the purity of his flute-like harmonics.

After that, Handel's D major Sonata comes as a harmonic palate cleanser. Ehnes is steady and gracious in the opening Affettuoso, and the subsequent Allegro sparkles with crisp rhythmic energy. In the Larghetto, as in 'Narcisse', his melodic line is seamless, its contours simply and beautifully shaped, and the final Allegro dances joyously along.

The group of encores (as Ehnes calls them in the notes) includes the 'Burleska' from Suk's Four Pieces op.17, a moto perpetuo of scampering semiquavers, brilliantly despatched, Tchaikovsky's 'Souvenir de Hapsal' op.2 no.3, sophisticated and insouciant, and the stomping lusty reels of Grainger's *Molly on the Shore* to finish. The recording is warm, clear and well balanced.

TIM HOMFRAY

HEISE String Quartets: no.1 in B minor; no.2 in G major; no.3 in B flat major
Nordic Quartet
DACAPO 8224734
A neglected Dane is compellingly revived

In his own land, and to a small band of collectors, Peter Heise (1830–79) is known as the composer of the first Danish opera of note, *Drot og Marsk* ('King and Marshal'). His widow stashed away his six quartets unpublished: a poor decision, anyone would think, having heard the first three of them so elegantly revived by the Nordic Quartet in this well-aired studio recording.

Blind listening to no.2 might place the composer in Vienna, somewhere between Schubert and Schumann; at least until the Largo absent-mindedly changes subject mid-flow. If you knew what you were looking for, you might find the peculiar kind of Danish extroversion familiar from Nielsen in the Minuet, and the finale takes up its cudgels with one of those innocent-sounding themes that Haydn (but not Heise) could probe so teasingly.

The First, in B minor, sounds as if it were written after hearing Mendelssohn's F minor unquiet farewell; it appears all three quartets were composed in 1852–3 (a decade after Schumann's 'quartet year'), and their youthful exuberance does not signify immaturity, as Jens Cornelius points out in a useful booklet essay. Heise knew what to do with his material, most convincingly so in the broader dimensions and expressive scope of no.3. So, in turn, do the members of the Nordic Quartet, with a period-aware palette of vibrato and a sensibility for those individual touches (a rustic drone in the middle of no.3's opening Allegro, for example) that make Heise distinctively Nordic. Bring on Volume Two.

PETER QUANTRILL

KURPIŃSKI Fantasy in C major **MONIUSZKO** String Quartets: no.1 in D minor; no.2 in F major **NOSKOWSKI** Variations on a theme by Viotti
Lutosławski Quartet
NAXOS 8573978
Fine playing but a variable offering of Polish Romantics

Composing his First Quartet while still a student, Stanisław Moniuszko (1819–72) seems to have opened the scores of Chopin's piano concertos and virtually copied out the string parts. At the time, who better for him to emulate? The country fair-style finale is good fun, done with a light touch by the Lutosławski Quartet, and in the Second Quartet (apparently from the same time, 1837–40) Moniuszko learns from the mistakes of the First, pares back his

COURTESY NORDIC QUARTET

ideas and develops them more thoughtfully towards a deliciously Mendelssohnian, throwaway finale. It's still no neglected masterpiece, but both engineering and playing are more lively and more forwardly engaged than the Camerata Quartet on the label Dux.

The forgettable conventions of Noskowski's 'Viotti' Variations (1873) will not detain you long, despite every effort on the part of the performers to invest them with dynamic contrast and strident drama. From a full half century earlier, it is the Fantasy by Karol Kurpiński that counts as a discovery of substance. The discursive form elicits bold harmonies, dramatic questions and unexpected answers much as it did for Mozart on the keyboard a generation earlier. The tonal refinement and fastidious vibrato control of the Lutosławski Quartet is worthy of its namesake.

PETER QUANTRILL

MAYER String Quartets, vol.1: in G major, in A major, in E minor

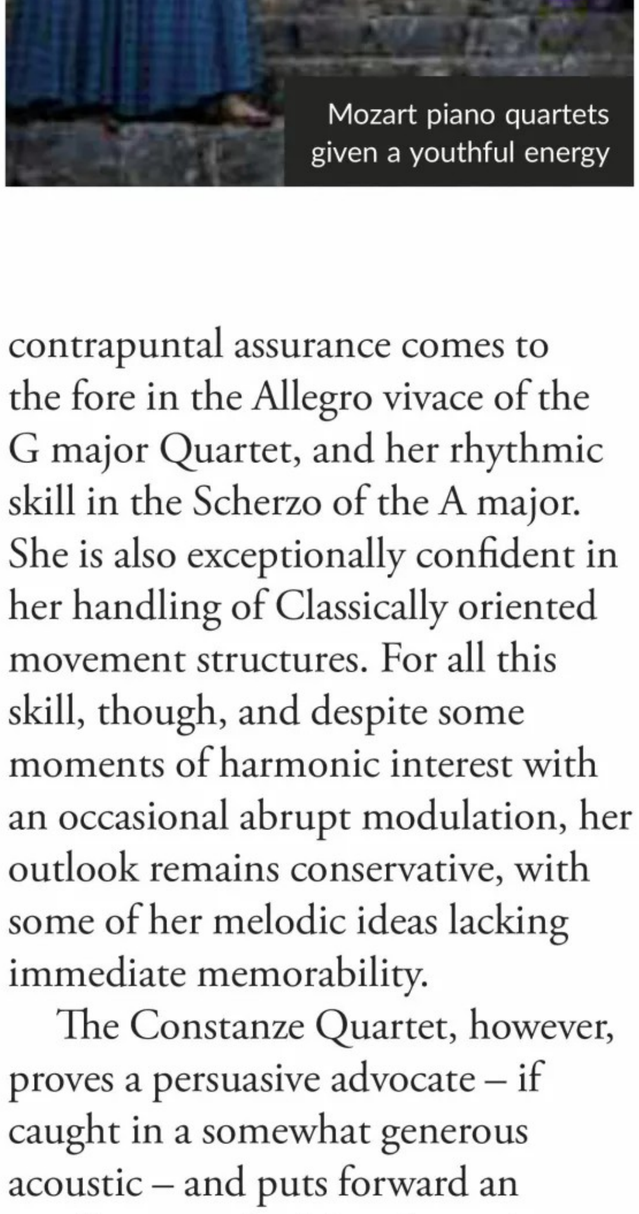
Constanze Quartet

CPO 555600-2

A forgotten 19th-century female composer is rehabilitated

As a female composer living in the 19th century, Emilie Mayer (1812–83) was regarded with suspicion, and this attitude dogged the reception of her work throughout her career. Not surprisingly, perhaps, she turned to writing quartets as a more practical way of disseminating her music. Indeed, she shows herself to be a remarkably able composer in terms of mastering chamber music textures.

Her style owes much to Mendelssohn, Mayer's own E minor Quartet's *Sturm und Drang* invention very much recalling the older composer's A minor Quartet. Her



Mozart piano quartets given a youthful energy

contrapuntal assurance comes to the fore in the Allegro vivace of the G major Quartet, and her rhythmic skill in the Scherzo of the A major. She is also exceptionally confident in her handling of Classically oriented movement structures. For all this skill, though, and despite some moments of harmonic interest with an occasional abrupt modulation, her outlook remains conservative, with some of her melodic ideas lacking immediate memorability.

The Constanze Quartet, however, proves a persuasive advocate – if caught in a somewhat generous acoustic – and puts forward an excellent case for Mayer's music. Its depiction of the musical dialogues is alert, the blending nicely homogenous, and the Adagio molto espressivo in the E minor Quartet is finely nuanced.

JOANNE TALBOT

MOZART Piano Quartets: G minor K478; E flat major K493

Francesca Dego (violin) Timothy Ridout (viola) Laura van der Heijden (cello) Federico Colli (piano)

CHANDOS CHAN20179

Powerfully characterful performances, full of panache

It is abundantly evident from the intense reading of K478's fervent opening Allegro that these are accounts to be reckoned with. The principal protagonist, pianist Federico Colli, contributes some assured, characterful and cleanly articulated playing on a bright-toned Steinway; his illustrious string-playing colleagues, using modern instruments and limited vibrato, assist him admirably in forging perceptive interpretations that are convincingly paced, stylish, eloquently shaped and tastefully embellished.

The players dispatch the first movement of K493 with an especially pleasing sense of freedom and perform both central slow movements, particularly K493's harmonically arresting Larghetto, with remarkable sensitivity to phrasing and expressive detail. They take the most liberties in Mozart's jovial final rondos, in which Colli essentially plays a concerto soloist's role.

He dominates the texture in K493 and executes the movement's challenging passagework with spontaneity and aplomb. In K478, following an appropriate additional piano lead-in before the first return of the rondo refrain, he and Dego indulge in some tongue-in-cheek ornamentation; he later introduces some audacious rubato. A lengthy unscripted pause on an interrupted cadence adds further drama near the movement's end.

The instrumental balance fractionally favours the piano over the strings in K478 but seems spot-on in K493, allowing full appreciation of its thematic interplay.

ROBIN STOWELL

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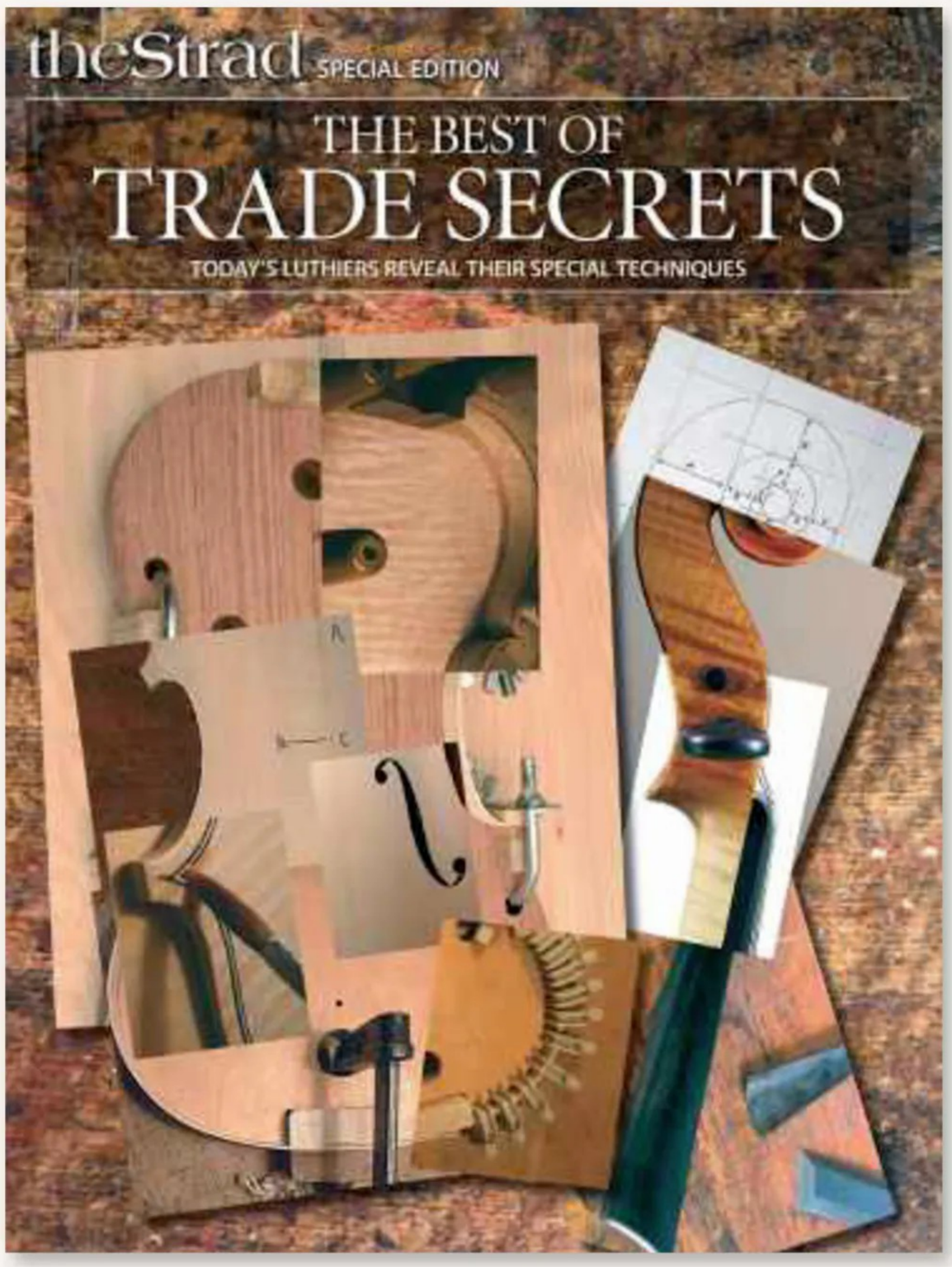

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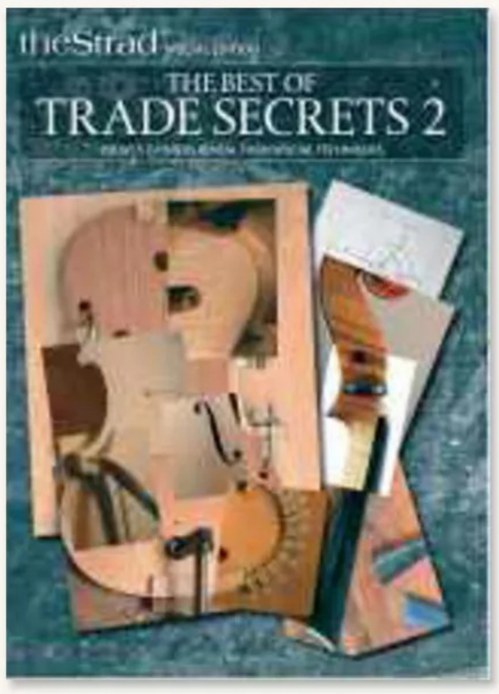

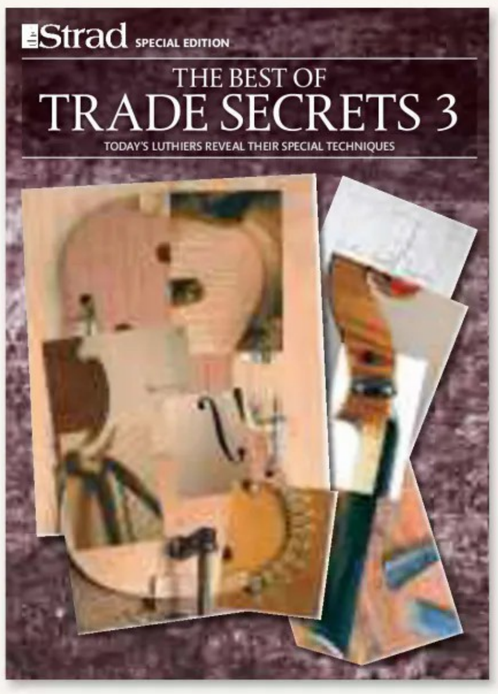

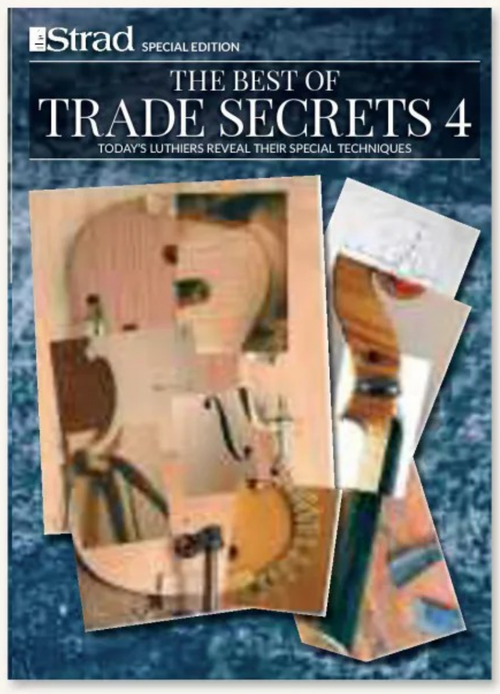

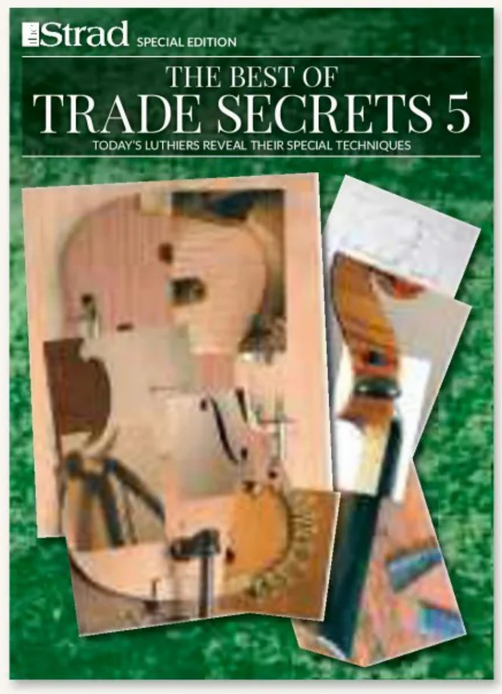

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SCHUMANN Piano Trios vol.2: no.3 in G minor op.110; Six Studies in Canonic Form op.56 (arr. Kirchner); Piano Quartet in C minor WoO32

Kungsbacka Piano Trio, Lawrence Power (viola)

BIS BIS-2477

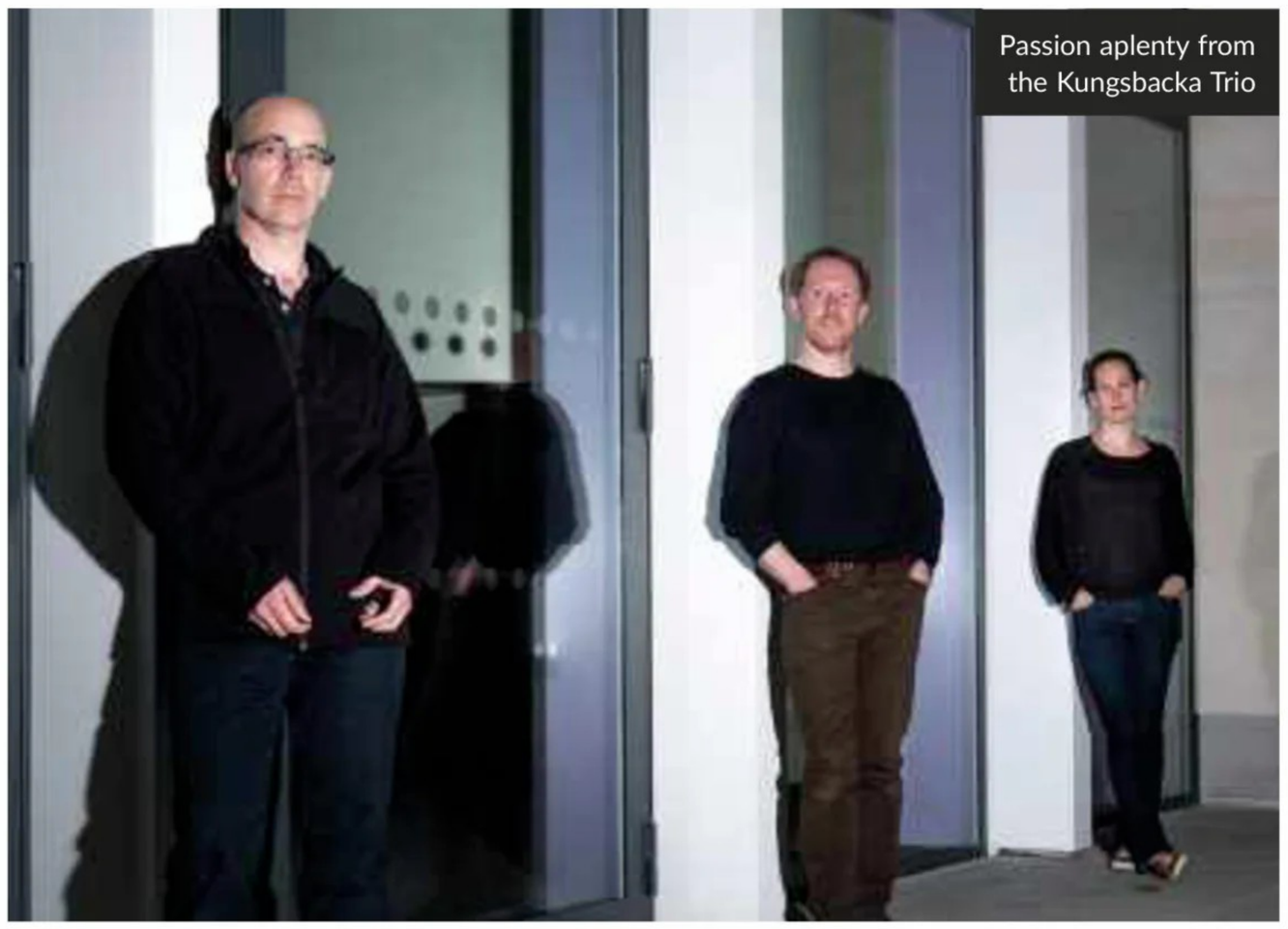
Much to engage in this second volume of chamber music

The Kungsbacka players start Schumann's G minor Trio with a sweeping turbulence, full of nervous energy that is ratcheted up still further in the development. Violinist Malin Broman plays the opening of the slow movement with a rich, woody sound. The accents of the torrid central section are punched out, and Broman leans on a heartfelt *sfp* in the final phrase.

The third movement presses forward, always urgent and always essentially legato. The finale has a rustic, dancing quality, shot through with a nervy unease; here, the trio pays particularly close attention to the composer's dynamics.

Schumann wrote his C minor Piano Quartet when he was 18 and still at university. It has both weight and carefree innocence, reflected here in a performance that is variously muscular and full of youthful joy. Broman caresses the melodies of the opening Allegro, her tone sweet and pure. There is much scalic banter in the Menuetto, contrasting with an Andante that has a magical passage of repose at its centre; the closing Allegro, with its martial rhythms and alluring melody, builds in exuberance. The six fugal studies, originally for pedal piano, feature some melancholy playing, with an eloquent dialogue between violin and cello in the third study and quiet nobility in the final Adagio. The recording is warm and close.

TIM HOMFRAY



Passion aplenty from the Kungsbacka Trio

ANDREW STAPLES

VIVALDI Sonatas for cello and continuo: B flat major RV47, 45 and 46; F major RV41; A minor RV43; E minor RV40; A minor RV44; E flat major RV39; G minor RV42

Antonio Mostacci (cello) Bologna Baroque

TACTUS TC672291 (2 CDS)

Persuasive readings of a Baroque master, with colour to the fore

In homage to their mentor, Cuban gambist José Vázquez, Antonio Mostacci and Bologna Baroque offer persuasive accounts of Vivaldi's nine surviving cello sonatas, all but one of which (RV42) comprise four movements of alternating slow and fast tempos. Mostacci is equal to almost all the technical challenges of the fast movements, although clarity of articulation is wanting in, for example, the extrovert Allegros of RV39 and RV47. He revels in Vivaldi's lively syncopations, agile cross-string leaps and other bravura effects, particularly in the buoyant finales of RV43 and RV46. He is also freely expansive in slow movements such as the second Largos of RV47 and RV41, in which he coaxes his cello into beautifully sustained cantilenas, adorned, when appropriate, with embellishment that largely complements the melodic line. Vivaldi's yearning appoggiaturas are also passionately emphasised, notably in the third movement of RV44.

These players perform at a pitch (A=440Hz) that both aligns with the perceived high Venetian 'standard' of the period and displays Mostacci's Montagnana-school cello to its best advantage. They employ a continuo instrumentarium of harpsichord, cello, theorbo and Baroque guitar in a variety of imaginative permutations from movement to movement as moods dictate. This results in a pleasing diversity of colour and texture, ranging from the full ensemble to Mostacci's solo cello in the opening section of RV42's Sarabanda, a cello duo in RV46's remarkably chromatic third movement and a combination of solo cello and plucked strings in the lyrical third movements of RV40, RV41 and RV43. The recorded sound is lucid and ideally balanced.

ROBIN STOWELL

SOLA

Works by **Bacewicz, Beamish, Feery, Fuchs, Holst, Lutyens, Maconchy** and **Musgrave**
Rosalind Ventris (viola)

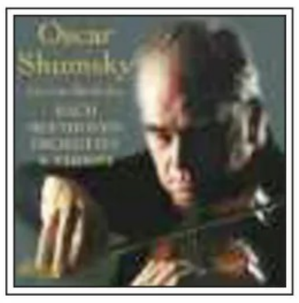
DELPHIAN DCD34292

A lockdown project proves fruitful for female composers

As many musicians did during the Covid pandemic, violist Rosalind Ventris set about exploring the byways of her instrument's unaccompanied repertoire. The present recital features some of her findings that – in Ventris's words – 'just happen to be by women composers'. Grażyna Bacewicz's *Polish Caprice* – transcribed from the violin original – makes for a most effective opening flourish, showcasing the luscious sound of Ventris's viola, as well as her crisp spiccato and sonorous chordal playing. Lillian Fuchs's *Sonata Pastorale*, a potentially rambling piece, is convincingly held together, its rhythmic backbone always perceivable behind some sensitive rubato. Amanda Feery's *Boreal* and Elisabeth Lutyens's *Echo of the Wind* are fascinating studies in sonority, gratefully seized by Ventris, who takes their idiosyncratic writing and sophisticated use of harmonics in her stride.

Like Fuchs, Sally Beamish is a professionally trained violist, which shows in *Penillion*, chosen in 2000 as the set piece at the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition: the influence of folk fiddling is much to the fore, with bare fifths, pedal notes and quick grace notes. Elizabeth Maconchy's almost Bartókian *Five Sketches* are followed by Imogen Holst's Suite, in which neo-Baroque gestures coexist with modernist traits such as whole-tone scales and a distorted dance in 5/8. The solemn Bachian chords of Thea Musgrave's *In the Still of the Night* lead to a transfigured ending on a single harmonic. A similarly comforting ending self-explanatorily concludes her *Light at the End of the Tunnel* – written in August 2020 at the height of the pandemic – and this lovingly recorded and presented, unreservedly recommendable recital.

CARLOS MARÍA SOLARE



OSCAR SHUMSKY: LIVE AT BERKELEY

BACH Violin Sonata in E minor BWV1023 (arr. Siloti) **BEETHOVEN** Violin Sonata no.9 in A major op.47 'Kreutzer'; Romance no.2 in F major op.50 **MOZART** Serenade no.7 in D major 'Haffner' – Rondo (arr. Kreisler) **PROKOFIEV** Solo Violin Sonata op.115 **TARTINI** Violin Sonata in G minor 'Devil's Trill' (arr. Kreisler)
Oscar Shumsky (violin)
Robin Sutherland (piano)

BIDDULPH 85030-2

A master violinist scintillates in a bold and brilliant programme

For aficionados, one look at the repertoire and the violinist's name will be enough: this programme is most of a recital Oscar Shumsky gave at the Berkeley campus on 25 January 1980, just before his re-emergence onto the concert scene.

He announces himself with a majestic account of the fanfare-like Prelude to Bach's E minor Sonata for violin and continuo; the Adagio is beautifully 'spoken' as if by a great actor; and the Allemande and Gigue display lovely rhythm.

The 'Kreutzer' is a sterner test for Robin Sutherland (1951–2020), but he responds like the warhorse he is, while Shumsky gives a splendid rendition with innumerable masterly touches: even if it's not the life-or-death experience you get from Huberman and Friedman, Busch and Serkin or Kogan and Gilels, it fully deserves the storm of applause.

Spurned by Oistrakh but taken up by Ricci, Prokofiev's Solo Sonata is delightful. Trenchant rhythm from Shumsky in the first movement gives way, in lighter passages, to a debonair cane-twirling stroll; the theme-and-variations second movement is superbly done; and the third, the most Prokofievian of all, dances gleefully.

I'm glad Shumsky plays Kreisler's edition of the 'Devil's Trill', better than the original. His performance is by turns beautiful, solidly rhythmical, declamatory and technically impeccable – the final cadenza is terrific.

Beethoven's Romance with piano is 'naked but nice', and for the Mozart-Kreisler add 'neat' – again the cadenzas are marvellous. Shumsky plays a 1905 Enrico Rocca and the booklet essay is a reminiscence by his violist son Eric.

TULLY POTTER

Rosalind Ventris: a solo voyage of discovery

SILVERSTROKE

Sarah-Jane Summers (violin)
Juhani Silvola (guitar) Silverstroke

HEILO HCD7384

A new chamber orchestra makes an impressive debut

There's passion and energy in spades in this new multinational collaboration between Inverness-born fiddler Sarah-Jane Summers and her Finnish-born guitarist/composer husband Juhani Silvola, plus the 12-piece Silverstroke ensemble of string players they've assembled in Oslo, where they're both now based. Summers propels things along winningly with her athletic, muscular playing, ringingly clear on the opening track 'Tune for Alistair', though rich and dripping with expressive portamento in the seasonal Shetland tune 'Christmas Day I Da Mornin". Silvola's experience as a dance music producer is put to good use in the builds and drops of 'Number 81', though they're convincingly rethought for a distinctively folk idiom.

Most impressive, however, are Summers and Silvola's inventive and constantly changing ensemble arrangements, which brilliantly showcase the talents of their musicians – from the punchy, Mozart-inspired 'Miss Mary MacDonald' to the fluid melodic imitations of 'Call & Response', inspired by Gaelic psalm singing (and also the first opportunity to hear Silvola's expressive, strongly articulated guitar playing).

There's little sense of slavish adherence to tradition here: instead, *Silverstroke* is a joyful, thrillingly inventive amalgam of Scottish and Norwegian tunes plus original compositions whose interconnections run so deep that it would be impossible (and fruitless) to tease them apart. Far better to revel in Summers and Silvola's abundant spirit and vitality, captured in a warm, rich recording.

DAVID KETTLE

Nils Økland and Sigbjørn Apeland: wonderfully conversational

GLIMMER

Nils Økland (Hardanger fiddle, violin)
Sigbjørn Apeland (harmonium)

ECM 4841962

Traditional and modern meet in an inspired musical conversation

With its unhurried, slowly unfolding melodies and its general air of restrained contemplation, there's a danger that this quietly exquisite collection of folk tunes and original compositions from Norwegian violinist Nils Økland and harmonium player Sigbjørn Apeland might end up merely as atmospheric, mood-setting background music. Which would be a huge shame, since it's a collection that greatly rewards attentive listening, and reveals enormous variety within its admittedly somewhat limited sonic palette.

There's the remarkable purity and sincerity of Økland's playing, for a start – with rich-toned violin improvisations around the achingly sad tune of opening track 'Skynd deg, skynd deg', for example, or the lithe ornamentation he brings to the subsequent 'Gråt ikke søte pike' or the later 'O du min Immanuel', complete with a halo of resonances from his Hardanger fiddle. Apeland summons an astonishing richness of sounds from his harmonium, most notably in the pulsing chords of his solo 'Myr', also spicing the austerity of some of the Norwegian tunes with some distinctively jazzy harmonies (such as in 'Reven sete på setet'), in interpretations that manage to sound both ancient and bang up to date.

ECM's close, warm recording feels like the ideal vehicle for this intimate, heartfelt conversation between friends – it's playing that invites you to listen, unafraid to show its vulnerabilities and emotions, and is entirely captivating as a result.

DAVID KETTLE

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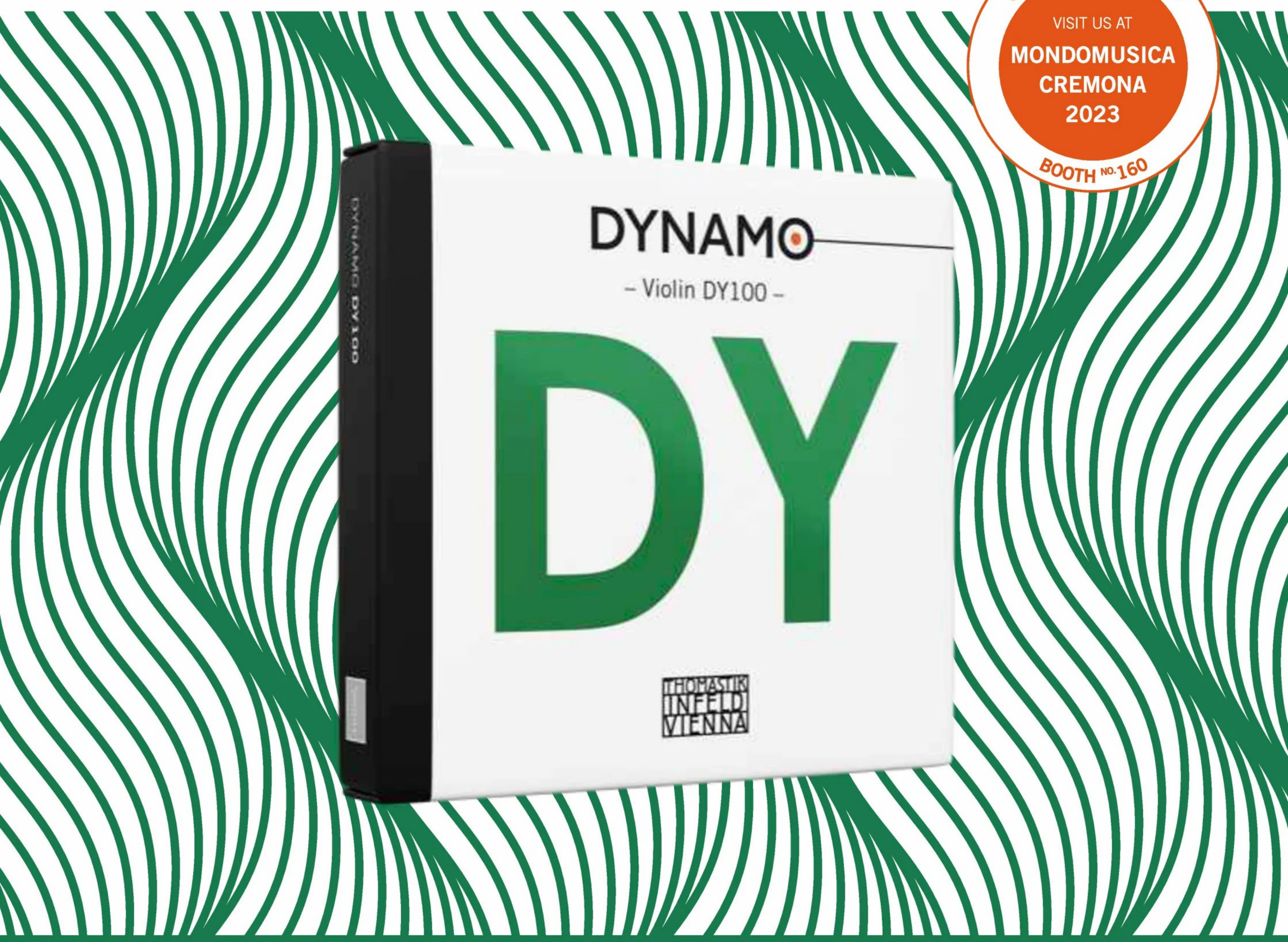

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THOMASTIK INFELD VIENNA

Chaconne Handbook I–II: A Theoretical and Practical Guide to the Chaconne from the Partita in D minor BWV1004 by Johann Sebastian Bach

Márta Ábrahám

VOL.1: 48PP ISMN 9790801682383

VOL.2: 15PP ISMN 9790801682376

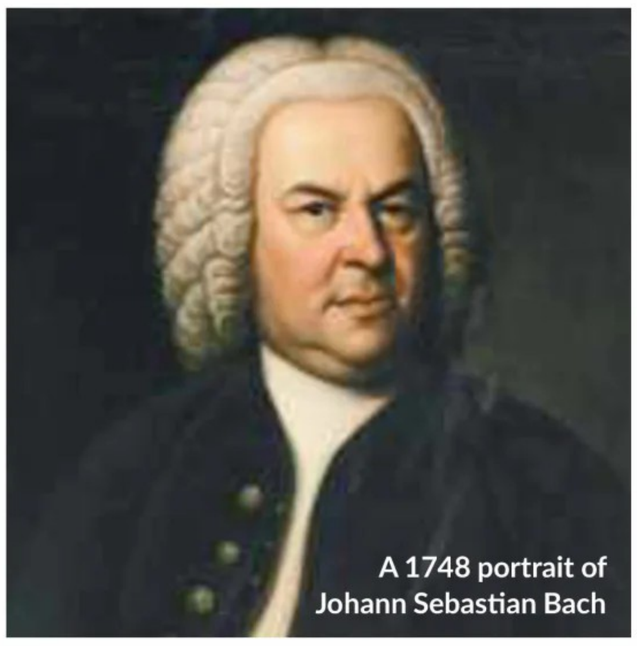
BIOBACH MUSIC PUBLISHER €70

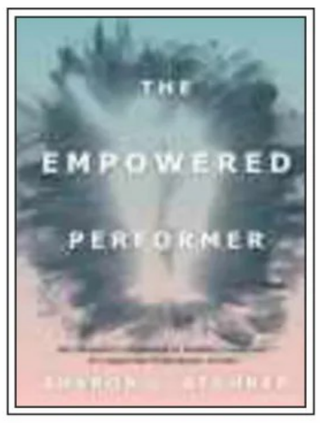
The first volume of Márta Ábrahám's handbook to Bach's Chaconne appears to share much common ground with her *Excerpts from Eternity*, co-authored with Barnabás Dukay and reviewed by Tully Potter in the March 2019 issue. Ábrahám outlines the Chaconne's manuscript and publication history and explains some of the principal compositional procedures employed. Her subsequent thorough analysis focuses especially on how the 64 four-bar variations are apportioned throughout the movement's tripartite (minor–major–minor) structure and how they align approximately with the golden ratio (33–19–12). She discusses the Chaconne's theme and its variants, and concludes that 50 of the variations can be considered as 25 pairs, 9 as three trios and 5 as stand-alones. She also flags up a musical and mathematical relationship between three of the stand-alone variations, specifically nos.19, 27 and 31 and their arithmetical 'doubles', nos.38, 54 and 62.

My alarm bells started ringing, however, when Ábrahám began to explore the Chaconne's 'possibilities for deeper interpretation' and enter the realms of speculation regarding its symbolic content. Basing her thoughts initially on the fashionable, yet unsubstantiated theory that Bach composed the movement as an epitaph for his first wife, Maria Barbara, Ábrahám's thought-provoking scenario seems idealistic and overly ambitious; and her recently discovered 'time code', in which she attempts to relate the proportions of the movement's variations (52 [= 33 + 19] + 12) to the 52 weeks and 12 months of 1720 and associate certain variations with specific events in Bach's personal life that year, including his wife's death, smack of an advocate for using pictures or fanciful storylines to spark interpretative creativity. 'The thick fog' that covers Variations 23–30, representing the period of Bach's sojourn in Carlsbad and Maria's death, does little to change that view; nor does Ábrahám's assertion that the sudden change from three to four voices in Variation 27 (the variation that, so she claims, coincides with the week of Maria's burial) indicates 'shock and pain… similar to a heartbeat'. Other questionable conclusions include: Ábrahám's contentions that the 25 identified pairs of variations represent the Bachs' marital relationship and that Bach makes a self-reference in Variation 41 (the number 41 being a gematria chart equivalent of his name), symbolising 'outburst and creative force'; the meanings that she assigns to the twelve final variations; and the links that she makes between Bach's 'four motherless children' and the four bass variants that represent the 'hidden Chaconne theme'. Her attempts to apply that 4:1 ratio to the Second Partita as a whole and her claim that 'the time it takes to play the four dance movements… is the same as…it takes to play the… Ciaccona' will only rarely (if ever) stand up to performance scrutiny. Some factual inaccuracies have slipped into the text – Bach's C major fugue, for example, was first published in Cartier's *L'art du violon* (Paris, 1798), which is not a 'collection of etudes' – along with occasional typographical or grammatical errors and awkward English phraseology.

Ábrahám's second volume presents the music, demonstrates some of the fruits of her structural analysis and uses the 'Colourful BACH' notation technique to good advantage to separate and highlight individual voices in the polyphony. Its format is not especially music-stand user-friendly, but its colour codes, appropriately coordinated with those in the first volume, and the music's arrangement (with the four-bar variations vertically aligned, rhythmically synchronised, numbered and appropriately affiliated to her analysis) greatly facilitate visual orientation on the page. Together with parts of the first volume's analytical content, it forms a functional pedagogical tool that will certainly assist performers and teachers in gaining a better understanding of the movement's structure, negotiating the score and forging insightful interpretations.

ROBIN STOWELL


A 1748 portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach



The Empowered Performer: The Musician's Companion in Building Confidence & Conquering Performance Anxiety
Sharon L. Stohrer
245PP ISBN 9798831764840
INDEPENDENT $20

This book is addressed to all musicians who 'hope, dream and wonder'. It is a firm nudge in the direction of enabling the taming of performance anxiety and then the empowerment that results. It is full of good advice and encouragement, with chapter headings such as 'Stepwise Success' and 'Tell your Inner Critic to Shut the H*ll Up'.

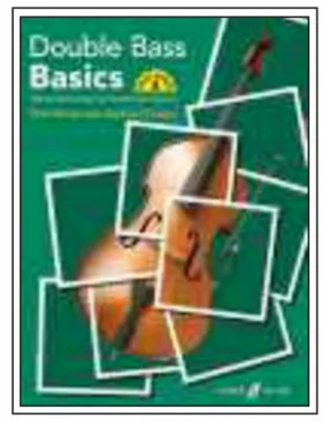
I remember the pages of *The Strad* devoted to Kató Havas, and videos and books, especially her *Stage Fright: Its Causes and Cures, with Special Reference to Violin Playing*, which dealt with this topic decades ago; many performers found Havas's tips helpful. Her writing was focused on string players and their problems engendered by stage fright, which in these pages do not need spelling out. The language has changed, and stage fright is often referred to as anxiety, although there are plenty of references to stage fright, too, as Stohrer doesn't dissemble and aims to provide a useful process for an approach.

There is emphasis on preparation, and that there is no silver bullet. Stohrer calls the process of overcoming stage fright a journey, and that for some it might be a longer one than for others. She invites you to doodle and be honest on written reactions. Attention is paid to the different types of focus, for example narrow focus, often achieved with the use of breath as in yoga. And the methods of achieving this are included in your daily practice.

Topics addressed include fear and its place in a performance; breathing, the natural tranquilliser of exercise; and practical techniques for personal programming. There are pages of strategies, a section on self-analysis, confronting your inner judges, and the importance of both rest and fun. And there are plenty of resources mentioned, including apps.

I found this an invigorating book, and very generous in its advice. One feels the author is really on side and trying to help, and the mood is always positive and encouraging but not prescriptive or controlling. Anyone suffering or affected by anxiety could benefit from its pages; and there is plenty, too, for the non-performer that could support approaches to difficulties in daily life.

ANNE INGLIS



Double Bass Basics
Paul Harris, Jessica O'Leary
64PP ISBN 9780571542659
FABER MUSIC £12.99

Double Bass Basics completes the beginner string series by Paul Harris and Jessica O'Leary. It guides young bassists from the very beginning of their playing journey to around ABRSM Grade 1 level. The book is laid out in 18 clear stages with 75 short tunes, from open strings to first position, and third-finger harmonics introduced before first position. There are both new compositions with amusing titles such as *Waltz of the Loose Bow Hairs* and *Marching Energetically to My Bass Lesson*, as well as well-known tunes including *Greensleeves* and *The Elephant.*

Backing tracks for each tune are clearly marked in the music. They are accessible by scanning the QR code on the first page of the book or from the Faber Music website. Piano accompaniments and double bass duet parts are available to download from the Faber Music website, although they are difficult to find as no direct weblink is given (it is bit.ly/3Q0W1nk). It would have been helpful to have the piano parts sold alongside the student's book.

Each stage comes with warm-ups, top tips and activities, and I enjoyed the focus on posture, singing as you play for intonation; and finger-strength exercises, such as finger tapping. The activities encourage freedom of movement from the very beginning, including arm swinging and waving. There is great focus on creativity, with opportunities for students to compose and give their music 'personality', one of the 'Four Ps' mentioned at the beginning: posture, pulse, phonology and personality. Performance skills and the importance of practice are also clearly explained.

The concern I have about this volume is that the authors (a violinist and clarinettist, also well respected as educators) do not understand the difference in teaching between the violin and double bass. Techniques such as double-stops and spiccato are introduced far too early alongside basic open strings and first position finger patterns. Spiccato, in particular, requires the dexterity that I would expect in a far more advanced student and certainly not at Grade 1. Equally, the left hand is firstly introduced on both the D and A strings, the latter being a thicker string and too challenging for the young student to press down in the early stages.

This book provides a good addition to the growing amount of repertoire for beginner bassists, to be used as additional repertoire, not as the sole tutor book.

ELOISE RIDDELL

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120 YEARS AGO

From the ARCHIVE

FROM THE STRAD SEPTEMBER 1903 VOL.14 NO.161

In his early life, Franz Joseph Haydn supported himself as a violinist. T. Lamb Phipson gives an account of the composer's formative years

Whilst Haydn was a little boy, about eight years of age, it happened that Herr Reutter, the choir-master of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, accidentally made his acquaintance. This choir-master induced his father to allow Haydn to go to Vienna, for Haydn was endowed by nature with a very sweet quality of voice.

At first, Reutter treated him well, and soon found that he had acquired a perfect jewel; but when, towards fifteen years of age, his voice broke, the hardhearted choir-master most cruelly turned him into the streets. It appears that, some time previously, this wretched man proposed to the boy that he should go to Italy for a certain surgical operation which would enable him to sing all his life in the soprano key. Mathias Haydn, the father, when he learnt the real nature of this infamous proposal, refused to allow his son to accept it.

The first night the poor lad did not know where to go, but was found asleep under the doorway of the Cathedral by the watchmen who were on duty. Hearing what had occurred, they kindly took him to their house, where he slept before a good fire, and next morning two of them proceeded to conduct him back to Reutter to make enquiries. But on the way, a poor violinist named Spangler met them. Spangler was surprised at his young friend's musical talent, and at the rapid progress he made in composition. For, as he could no longer sing, and it was found difficult to get him into any orchestra as a violinist, he devoted his time to composition, whilst Spangler went to fulfil his own engagements.

Down below in the same house, was a wig maker named Keller, who was very fond of music. He often came to the little lodging in the fourth floor, where there was an old clavecin, to listen to a sonata for violin, the first of Haydn's compositions. Finally, Keller got Haydn appointed as first violin in the orchestra of the Reverend Fathers of Pity, and he also called the attention of his friends to some new compositions for clavecin, and got Haydn a few pupils.

One day, as Haydn was tuning the clavecin of the Countess de Thun, the lady herself came unawares into the room, attracted by and astonished at his improvisations on her splendid instrument. She ended by giving him an order to write a sonata for her, for which she paid him in advance the sum of twenty-five ducats.

This was, indeed, a stroke of fortune for the young musician; but it did not end there. The Countess afterwards introduced Haydn to Prince Esterhazy, who engaged him as his Master of the Music, and at whose Court he remained for the rest of his life. ●

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

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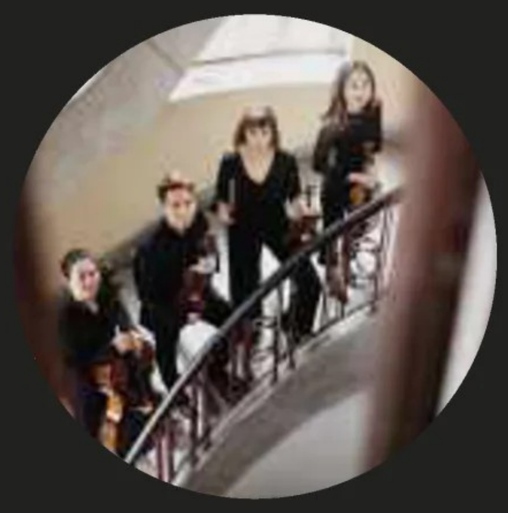

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The eight-stringed national instrument of Norway has an intriguing history and a plethora of designs

Matching bows with players
We ask musicians and dealers for their tips on finding a bow that's right for them

Pablo Casals
How the virtuoso Catalan cellist, who died 50 years ago this year, revived interest in the Bach Cello Suites

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In Focus
Andrew Fairfax examines a c.1800 violin by Joseph Panormo

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Using one of *The Strad*'s posters to make an instrument template

Sentimental *Work*

ELDBJØRG HEMSING

The Norwegian violinist has fond memories of hearing Bruch's First Violin Concerto for the first time – and advice for anyone looking to play it themselves in the future

I first heard Max Bruch's Violin Concerto no.1 in G minor when I was ten years old. It was the first year I attended the Meadowmount School of Music in New York state; the concert hall made a deep impression on me, being half inside and half outside with swathes of netting all around. In the late evenings, with the crickets chirping, I was exposed for the first time to all kinds of amazing repertoire, and one of them was the Bruch Concerto. I thought it was fascinating and very beautiful, and I immediately wanted to perform it myself.

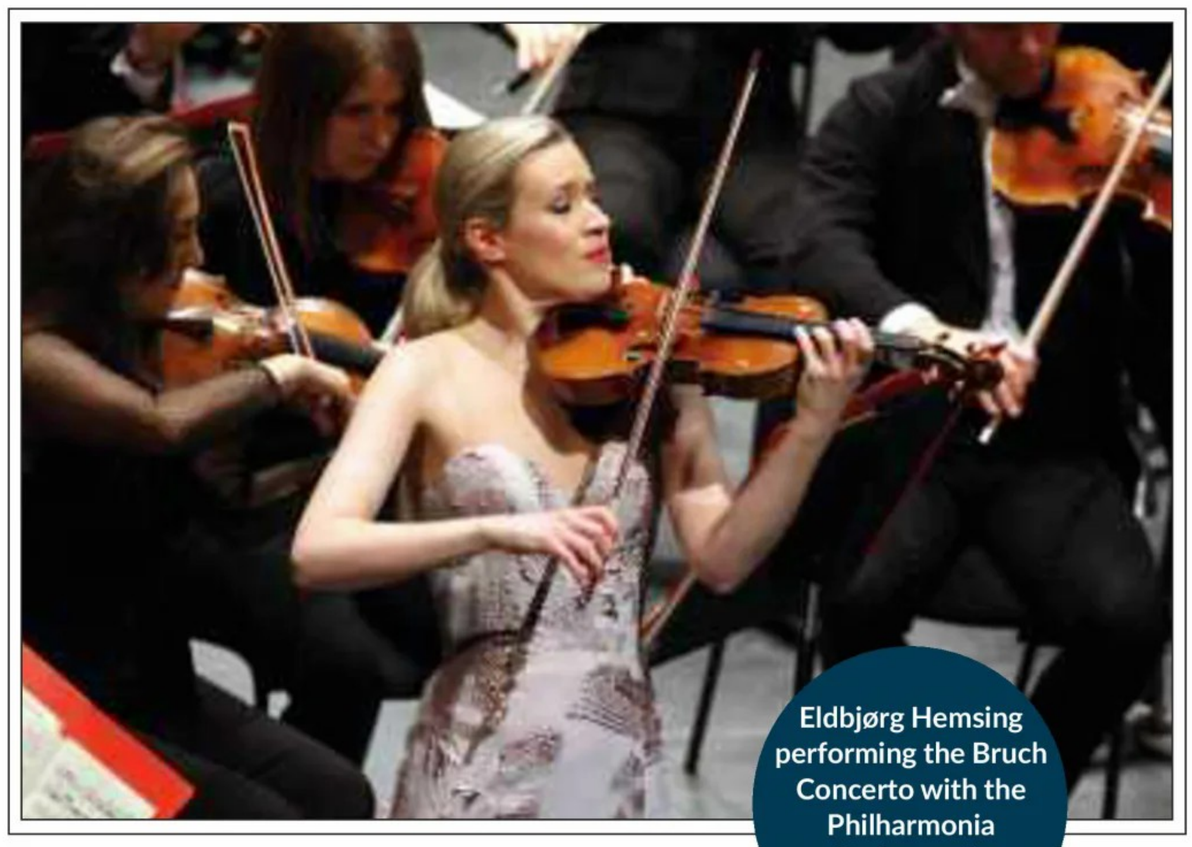
It was one of the first concertos I learnt from start to finish, along with the Mendelssohn. To me the Bruch always had an interesting depth to it: the short orchestral opening has a dark, mysterious feel, as if it has no clear direction. Then there are two short passages for the violin that also don't give much sense of where the piece is heading, until the rhythm gets going a little bit further through the first movement. Then unusually it segues straight into the second movement containing the duo with the viola, which is one of the most beautiful themes in the repertoire: both intimate and very warm-sounding. Then of course the third movement brings a huge firework finale that lifts everyone out of their seats! All the way through, there are so many small interludes and duets with other instruments, as well as beautiful melodies, that it's a piece where you can always find something new, each time you play it.

When I was working on the concerto with my tutor, the main focus for me – apart from playing it in tune! – was to find the three clear identities in each movement and bring them all out. I think the virtuosity comes second to understanding the piece and its different characters. It's incredible how even after so many recordings of the concerto, players can still find their own unique interpretations. I've definitely found inspiration, for instance, in Janine Jansen's recording for Decca, with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under Riccardo Chailly – the energy and colours she brought to it are overwhelming. For now, I don't have any plans to record it myself just yet, but time will tell!

I actually took a break from playing the Bruch in concert for a while, but came back to it this year. In June I performed it with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Santtu-Matias Rouvali and realised again how melodic it is. Working with Santtu was a pleasure: while I was rehearsing I could see a certain twinkle in his eye as he found how to capture the energy of that third movement. It was like he was giving me the inspiration to create a magical bubble of sound that would transport the audience along with me. It brought home to me how every conductor can bring something unique to the piece, whether it's a new interpretation or a particular brand of energy.

If I were giving a student advice on playing the concerto, I'd tell them not to get bogged down in the technical minutiae, but to focus on working out the character they want to build into it. The fun of the piece is to find the movements' personalities and bring them out as much as possible, which enables you to soar above whatever technical difficulties it might contain. This is a concerto that allows you to express your whole personality, which informs what colours you want to use. And finally: just have fun with it! ●

INTERVIEW BY CHRISTIAN LLOYD



Eldbjørg Hemsing performing the Bruch Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra in June 2023

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